

THE
ROYAL MINSTREL;

OR, THE
WITCHERIES OF ENDOR.

AN
EPIC POEM, IN TWELVE BOOKS.

BY
J. F. PENNIE.

‘ All the books of the Bible are either most admirable and exalted pieces
of poetry, or are the best materials in the world for it — Cowley

Where shall we trace, through all the page profane,
A livelier pleasure, and a purer source
Of innocent delight than the fair book
Of holy truth presents — Mrs Hannah More.

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TO
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
PRINCE AUGUSTUS FREDERICK,
DUKE OF SUSSEX,
K. G. D. C. L.
EARL OF INVERNESS, BARON OF ARKLOW,
&c. &c. &c. &c.

SIR,

THE British Public have, with peculiar satisfaction, long beheld, in the person of Your ROYAL HIGHNESS, a Prince forsaking the blandishments of a Court, and the alluring scenes of Regal splendour, for the charms of Literature, and the pursuits of Science. They have witnessed with delight your continued exertions in the cause of Civil and Religious Liberty; they have watched your progress, as a Senator, as a Scholar, and as the steady Patron of those Institutions which have for their object the happiness of the human race; and, with one accord, they hail you as a Patriot Prince. The universality of this opinion will, I trust, shield me from the charge of adulation, whilst I thus attempt to record, with my feeble pen, virtues which are well known, and justly appreciated; nor can it be

a matter of surprise, that I should have been anxious to obtain permission to dedicate the humble efforts of my Muse to a Personage, who, while his amiable qualities dignify his exalted rank, and endear him to his Countrymen, is particularly distinguished for the encouragement he affords to those who labour in the literary vineyard.

Sincerely hoping that Your ROYAL HIGHNESS may find, among its numerous defects, some passages in the "Royal Minstrel" not unworthy of Your perusal, and conscious that its tenour is strictly conformable with the purest Morality, I venture to submit it to Your ROYAL HIGHNESS's inspection; and beg to subscribe myself

Your ROYAL HIGHNESS's

Most faithful and devoted Servant,

J. F. PENNIE.

Jan. 1, 1819.

ADVERTISEMENT.

IN attempting to compose an Heroic Poem; I am not insensible of the magnitude of the task, nor of the great difficulty attending its due performance. Dryden has declared it to be the greatest work in human nature. Alluding to the assertion of Aristotle, that Tragedy was the most perfect work of Poetry, the English bard observes, that “the Epic Poem is more noble, the action is greater, the extension of time enlarges the pleasure of the reader, and the episodes give it more ornament and more variety.” That few have had the hardihood to undertake this species of composition, and that still fewer have been successful in the undertaking, I am well aware; and it may be considered too much presumption in me to launch my bark on such a perilous ocean, where the wrecks of those which have foundered ought perhaps to be viewed by future adventurers as beacons to warn them of the rocks by which they are surrounded.

In the construction of the following Poem, I have selected, as its Hero, a man raised from the humblest

station to vindicate the honour of God's chosen people; one whose early years were alike distinguished by artless innocence and peaceful habits; who progressively became his country's champion, the leader of the armies of Israel, and its most illustrious monarch. The Son of Jesse undoubtedly ranks next to the Messiah in the importance of his mission and in the dignity of his station; and certain events of his life justify us in declaring him the prototype of the Saviour of Mankind. Like the latter, he was appointed by the Almighty to his high office; he had to endure a series of painful trials, and to meet with persecution in its severest forms; yet, animated by the Holy Spirit, and fighting "in the name of the Lord," he eventually triumphed over his enemies, and reached a crown of glory.

Were it necessary to adduce authorities to prove their similitude, the Scriptures would abundantly furnish them. This, however, would be useless digression; and I shall therefore content myself by merely observing, that the Apostle, in his Epistle to the Romans, avows that Jesus is that "Root of Jesse which shall rise to reign over the Gentiles." I am, however, not unconscious that, if we turn from the more brilliant scenes of David's life, when he was beloved by God and honoured by men, and contemplate that portion of it when, forgetful of his Maker, he sullied the purity of his regal office by the commission of atrocious

crimes, the similitude entirely fails; and I shall here remark, that the Poem is brought to a close at the very period when the Hero of it had attained the objects for which he had been contending, when he was hailed as the deliverer of his country, and when the Most High had established a covenant of Royalty with him, ensuring the possession of the throne of Judah to his family till the coming of the Messiah.

Nothing can therefore, I think, be reasonably urged against the propriety of selecting the heroic actions of the renowned king of Israel as the subject of an Epic Poem; but some apology may be thought due to those readers whose sober turn of mind cannot relish the daring and noble flights of poetic imagination, and who think it profanation to entwine the shades of sacred history with the flowers of fiction, or to be indebted to mythological similes for the illustration of passages which might otherwise appear too destitute of descriptive imagery. If such objections be urged, I cannot do better than to refer those, who may make them, to Dr. Blair on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, Lect. xxxviii. in which he says, “ Lord Bacon takes notice of our taste for fictitious history, as a proof of the greatness and dignity of the human mind. He observes, very ingeniously, that the objects of this world, and the common train of affairs which we behold going on in it, do not fill the mind, nor give it entire satisfaction: we seek for something that shall expand the mind in a

greater degree,—we seek for more heroic and illustrious deeds, for more diversified and surprising events, for a more splendid order of things, a more regular and just distribution of rewards and punishments, than we can find here. Because we meet not these in true history, we have recourse to fiction; we create worlds according to our own fancy, in order to gratify our capacious desires, accommodating the appearances of things to the desires of the mind, and not bringing down the mind, as history and philosophy do, to the course of events.”

How far I have succeeded in the attempt to interweave the beauties of fiction with one of the most instructive and sublime portions of Scripture History, it is not for me to determine; but that I have given my characters the manners and customs peculiar to their nation, and the age in which they lived, will not, I think, be denied. In the hope that my labours may not have altogether failed, I submit the following sheets to the decision of that Public which is ever ready to award impartial justice to those who bend to its decrees.

Lulworth Cottage,
March 1819.

THE ROYAL MINSTREL.

BOOK I.

THE ARGUMENT.

The witch of Endor, in a general assembly of dæmons and weird sisters, holds a consultation on the best means of overthrowing Saul the king of Israel, who with his army lies encamped in the vale of Elah.—Satan rehearses what he has done against the seed of Israel since he heard in heaven that Christ was to spring from the loins of Abraham.—Adramelec informs the infernal assembly that Saul is, for his obstinacy, rejected by his God, and that another is already chosen to succeed him in the throne : that this new favourite is David, from whom the Messiah is to spring.—Moloc becomes the guardian genius of Goliath, who enters the assembly to consult the witch of Endor, and to solicit her aid in battle.—The hags perform a grand sacrifice to the devils.—Moloc appears visible in all his terrors to the giant, who, by the command of Endor, sacrifices a lovely infant to him on the magic altar.—The giant is clothed with invulnerable armour ; and, the enchantments vanishing, he returns to the camp of the Philistines.



THE ROYAL MINSTREL.

BOOK I.

DARK was the night, and loud the tempest rav'd,
As on the strand the hag of Endor stood,
Which skirts the blue-rob'd sea of Cinneroth;
High wav'd her wild locks on the passing blast,
And thrice, with potent witcheries and spells,
She call'd the guardian dæmon of the isle,
That in the centre of the troubled deep
Rose forest-crested, and begirt with rocks,
Which never fisherman, by evening star
Or moonbeam, visited; for horrid sights,
And sounds unholy, had been seen and heard
By some whom storms had haply on its shores
Night-founder'd.—Soon to view appear'd the fiend,
Crossing the mountain billows; round him shone
A ghastly radiance from the robe he wore,

Of green and purple flame, which through the gloom
Beam'd like a meteor waving on the winds
That hurried howling by him ! Soon embark'd
The witch to reach the isle ; terrific grinn'd
Her ferryman as on the midnight waves
Their skiff, embosom'd in a whirlwind, rode ;
And glaring lightnings shot their hissing bolts
Against the upstart surges' foam-crown'd heads.
Dire was the war of thunders, winds, and waves,
And to its dark foundation shook the isle
As, mutt'ring charms, the sorc'ress touch'd the shore !
On to th' enchanted cavern now she mov'd
With strides gigantic ! while at every step
Serpents and noxious reptiles hiss'd around,
More frightful than the brinded snake that kill'd
The bride of Orpheus on her nuptial day.

The brazen portal, 'mid the yawning rocks,
Now met her glist'ning eye ; her wither'd hand
The magic horn, that by a golden chain
Hung from a beetling cliff of adamant,
Seiz'd dauntless, and a blast so loudly blew
As drown'd the thunder, and with fearful clang
From rock to rock re-echoed through the storm !
With instantaneous crash asunder flew
The massy gates ! when straight appear'd a den
Of vast extent, and full of loathsome sights !
The witches' Pandæmonium, and the haunt
Of spirits foul, and monsters terrible !

More gloomy than that grim Trophonian cave,
Within whose portal he that enter'd once
Was never seen again to wear a smile !
A blazing altar midst the cavern stood,
Compos'd of grinning skulls which Murder's hand
Cemented close with blood ! enormous snakes,
More hideous than the Amphisbæna dire,
Slime-gender'd Python, or the horn'd Cerastes,
Roll'd in horrific volumes round its base !
A scaly dragon with extended wings,
More monstrous than Chimæra, o'er the fumes
Of burning spells, that from the altar rose,
Hover'd with eye of basilisk most dread !
Beneath him stood th' infernal cannibal
Eurymonë, grinding with hellish jaws
A malefactor's foul unburied bones !
The dæmons, Rapine, Famine, Plague, and War,
Despair, and Suicide his offspring mad,
And Murder with his hands all dy'd in blood,
Joining the train, a sin-begotten crew
Of fell diseases, hand in hand danc'd round
To mystic measures ; while their emperor Death
So hideous grinn'd, that Nature quite expir'd !
Hither from Lapland, and Siberian wilds ;
From Tagus' golden sanded strand, and where
Propontis with its azure flood the coast
Of Asia laves, to Belurs' summits, white
With fleecy mists, that border China's land ;

From Colchis' fields with magic herbs o'erspread,
And dire Avernus' dark asphaltic shore ;
From spectre-haunted Syrtes, and the heights
Of the Altäic mountains ; from the banks
Of Niger's flood, and wild Zahara's wastes,
Whose eddying sands whole caravans o'erwhelm ;
From the blue lake of eagles ;^a from the steeps
Of Imaus' top, whose rocks the clouds divide ;
From Timor's and Taheitees' sea-girt isles,
And Sindas' sacred source to Carazan,^b
Tallest of all the Andes that o'erlook
Columbia's land ; and from the battle-feasts
Of Anthropophagi, held on the shores
Of the wild wave-encircled Caribbees ;
From the bright fields of Earth's attendant star
E'en to the poles of the remotest globe,
Whose orbit vast the solar system bounds,
And whose long year survives the age of man—
Was now arriv'd a strange and motley throng
Of most unsightly hags, to celebrate
Their dread mysterious orgies, and o'erthrow,
By mortal and infernal agency,
Their enemy, th' anointed son of Kish,
With all his troops in Elah's vale encamp'd
With these assembled too the potentates,
Princes, and pow'rs of darkness ; loud were heard
Dæmonian voices through the cavern's gloom
In high debate, sonorous as the seas

By tempests rudely vex'd ; others apart
In calmer consultation sat retir'd,
Half visible amid the hollow clefts
Of hanging rocks, that caught a partial gleam
Of the far-distant altar's purple flames ;
Reflected from the fierce o'erwhelming glare
Of serpent eyes, that crested each dark crag,
And, like twin-stars, shot death-wing'd rays malign
Through all the murky cave's Cimmerian shades !

Now at the altar bow'd the fiend-like hag,
That seem'd the queen of hell ; sullen and dark
She grimly stood, as the cold starless night
That follows winter's late-departed storm.
Now the curs'd fiend of Pluto's red abyss,
Who aided the first fratricide's mad blow,
Before the sorceress held a murderer's skull
That with the blood of strangled babes o'erflow'd,
In which her finger now she seven times dipp'd.
The ghastly dæmon, pleas'd, then laugh'd so loud,
That all the horrid cavern, far and near,
Resounded with the echoes of the roar !
Seven times she threw upon the pale blue flames
Her magic incense, and with dazzling glare
Roll'd upward, seven-fold brighter, the green blaze.
A globe of fire the dragon now enclos'd,
Who, phoenix-like, in vivid lightning bask'd,
And flapp'd his hideous wings with sounds so dread,
That all seem'd mute with fear ; while the high roof

And craggy walls of the dæmonian cave
Shone with illusive beams of purple light !

“ All hail ! ” exclaim’d the hag, “ ye thrones of hell !
And ye, dark daughters of enchantment, who
Ride on the sea-uprooting whirlwind’s wing,
And pace, with step unsinking, ocean’s wave,
Now in full frequency and assembly, hail ! ”

“ Hail to the witch of Endor ! magic’s queen ! ”
Now hollowly through all the vault resounds,
Till Stygian thunders drown the hoarse acclaim.
The thunder ceas’d, and its last echo died
Upon the farthest dungeon’s tainted mist,
As from his seat, the grim divan amid,
Th’ Arch-fiend of darkness rose and thus began :
“ Ye haggard sisters, subjects, firm allies,
Whose potent pow’r earth, air, and hell, obey !
Summon’d to this your necromantic hall
By elf-wrought spells and hidden characters,
We spirits fall’n, dominions, thrones, and pow’rs,
All now desire to know with us your will.”

To whom the Witch of Endor thus reply’d :
“ Lords of the ever-burning lake below,
Ye are not ignorant how this late-sprung king,
This sovereign of old Israel’s favour’d race,
Has sought to take our lives, and exile all
Our cabalistic tribe from Canaan’s land.
Already many to this monarch’s zeal
For Israel’s laws have hapless victims fall’n.

Hither, then, we your faithful slaves on earth,
By my appointment and by my command,
Have from the globe's remotest corners come,
Hors'd on the sightless winds and darkling storms,
Outriding heaven's own bolt, to claim the pow'r
Of vengeance on this prince, his throne to crush,
Himself, and all his upstart race, to dust! —
Already has the spirit, whose high name
Is dreaded in Azotus, Accaron,
And Gaza's realm, inspir'd the chieftains bold,
Who rule his worshippers, to wage new wars
Against his empire; now at Shochoh stand.
Philistia's heroes, eager for the fight,
And dare the trembling Israelites to arms!
But, high in fame and matchless enterprise,
Above them all stands, like a tow'ring cliff
On ocean's storm-swept marge, Goliath, chief
Of Gath's proud tow'rs, against whose mailed breast,
Phœnicia's bulwark, the fierce conflict's swell
It's deep encrimson'd tide rolls on in vain!
Of more than mortal size and peerless might,
He bids defiance to the Hebrew host,
Whose valiant heroes flutter, panic-struck,
Around their trembling king, like fearful doves
When the blood-snuffing vulture hovers near!
Then let us with immortal agency
Him aid in battle, sheathe his giant limbs
In mail invulnerable as the rock

Is to the rude assaults of winds and waves,
And let the fiercest chief of hell, who gain'd
The highest fame when fields were fought in heav'n,
For deeds of warfare his good genius be,
That he may pull this monarch from his throne,
And drag him fetter'd at his chariot wheels !”

Whereat, with brow beclouded, Lucifer,
Dark as a pillar of smoke that rolls aloft
From the red ruins of a burning pile,
Late the abode of grandeur, thus reply'd :
“ Sisters of sorcery, since first expell'd
The amaranthine bow'rs of bliss eterne,
It has been my delight, my solace still,
For loss of heav'n, for hell's expressless pains,
To thwart and frustrate the designs of God,
And mar his noblest works ! For that I sought
Alone with vent'rous wing, through the dark realms
And trackless waste of chaos and old night,
This late-made world ; which finding, soon despoil'd
Of all its heav'n-like beauties ! Soon by wiles,
His Maker's brightest image, new-form'd man,
The demi-god of earth, did I allure
To acts of disobedience ; which provok'd
The Deity to curse the world, and doom
His favourite, man, with all his race, to death
For tasting fruit forbidden !—which when told,
At my return triumphant back to hell,
Such peals of loud convulsive laughter burst,

As rent the concave of her smoky vaults,
And to the battlements of heav'n arose,
Frighting their guard cherubic!—

Since I learnt

In heav'n, where I among the sons of God
Do oft myself present, that soon should spring
Messiah, the begotten of the High'st,
From Abraham's loins, Redeemer to become
Of the fall'n world, and conq'rer e'en of death;
Leagued with these pow'rs assembled, have I still
Sought to oppress the race elect, whom fain
I would destroy, and them obnoxious make
To the supreme displeasure by their crimes.
'Twas to that end I first induced the king
Who in the Memphian palaces that crown
The verdant margin of prolific Nile
With iron sceptre rul'd, to make them slaves;
With dire oppression's galling yoke to bend
Their necks to earth, and all their issue male
Seek to destroy in Egypt's turbid stream!
But soon th' Omnipotent, with pow'rful arm,
Unheard of plagues upon th' Egyptians pour'd;
Then, rolling back on either hand the waves
Of their affrighted sea, across its gulfs
And oozy beds, laid open to the day,
A pathway form'd, engirt with liquid walls
Of surgy billows, that sublimely rose

Above the tallest pilgrim bannerol
And gleamy spear of Israel's host elect,
Through which he led them to the shores that skirt
The confines of the dreary wilderness.
Yet still I lurk'd amid their wand'ring camp,
And tempted them to murmur 'gainst the High'st,
And sigh for Egypt's plenty. Scarce had ceas'd
The roar of Sinai's cloud-involved top,
Ere the high pontiff of their curtain'd fane
On Oreb's plain set up the golden calf,
Copy of Memphian Isis, for their god ;
To whom they sacrific'd, and shouting cried,
' This is our great deliv'rer from the yoke
Of Egypt's tyranny ! ' Soon Peor, fam'd
In Sittim's vale, the wanderers seduc'd
To pay him wanton orgies by the moon,
And dare such acts as pluck'd on their own heads
The red destruction down.—But why rehearse
The deeds that all must know by us achiev'd,
More than to show how I abhor the race ;
And will endeavour, with these pow'rs conjoin'd,
To root them out of Canaan's fertile land.—
Should Saul victorious in the field become,
(For vict'ry heretofore his arms hath crown'd,)
Say, ye assembled peers, what unborn crimes
Can Erebus engender?—what new sins,
To tempt both king and people to commit

And out-sin their forefathers ?—till their God,
His promises to their progenitors
Forgetting, shall his chosen minions loath !”

Adramelec, uprising from his seat,
Now forward mov'd with sparkling eye of fire,
Whose beams malign shot baneful pestilence ;
Yet was his port sublime, and glory, dimm'd,
Linger'd amid the scars of his dark brow,
As playful lightnings riding on the storm
Illume some pillar'd ruin's tow'ring height :—
“ Know ye not, ancient thrones, that regal Saul,
Heav'n's own selected to possess the crown,
Already for his pertinacious acts
Of disobedience to th' Eternal's will
Is scorn'd, rejected, and by seers denounc'd,
Forsaken of his God ! Yes, this proud prince,
Though erst a prophet, fill'd with heav'n's own fire,
Is now my slave !—Aye, mine, ye wond'ring chiefs !
Oft do I of his intellective pow'rs
Possession take, and in the vortex wild
Of moody phrenzy whirl them round ; while he,
Amid the bow'rs of indolence reclin'd,
Or with his warriors at the solemn feast,
In his proud hall of sounding shields, enrapt
With wine-crown'd song or dance, turns madly fierce,
And, like a whirlwind rushing from its cave,
Spreads round him dire confusion and dismay !
Yet still eftsoons delusive calms succeed

These storms outrageous, as the ocean wave
Serenely sleeps upon its pebbled strand,
When blust'ring winds with wasted fury die.
But, should Philistia's champion be o'erthrown
By Saul's assembled legions, yet the crown
Rests not with him, nor his unsceptred line—
There is another, on whose youthful brow
The sacred balm in private has been pour'd
By Samuel, the fam'd seer. Have you not heard
Of blooming David, whose melodious harp
With dulcet sounds, such as a seraph breathes
To welcome sainted mortals to the skies,
Has oft the pow'r, by Heav'n so will'd, to chase
Me from the bosom of infuriate Saul,
And those lymphatic fumes of madness clear
Which mantle on his reason? This fair youth,
Whose beauty would allure the Syrian nymphs
From the green margin of Adonis' stream,
And make them quite neglect their love-lorn lyres,
To weave fresh chaplets for his crisped locks,
This shepherd boy, is Israel's destin'd prince,
Though kept from all, except his father's house,
A secret most profound, through fear of Saul.
This beauteous youth erewhile forsook the court,
Where he was armour-bearer to the king,
And now in Bethlehem's soft inglorious shades
Droops in obscurity, and tends the flocks
Of Jesse, his old sire, till strange events,

As pre-ordain'd by high Omnipotence,
Shall lead him forth to glory and to pow'r.
Now to our purpose :—From this David's loins,
Whose kingdom is to last till time shall end,
I've learnt that the Messiah is to spring,
The potent God ! this God and man conjunct,
This foe of Satan, whom the mysteries
Of Israel's strange religion typify ;
Who is to conquer sin, and death, and hell,
And reign the universal Lord of all !—
It then behoves us, virtues, thrones, and pow'rs,
This rival empire's founder soon to crush,
And frustrate his intents who would restore
Adam's fall'n sons ; which to accomplish he
Th' empyreal throne of ancient brightness leaves,
The fulgent shrine of Deity, the seat
Of his eternal Father, here to reign
In this our earthly kingdom, and thrust out,
By might resistless, us, the gods of earth !
We then shall be—Oh, hear it, ye, who strove
To match heav'n's king—in chains of penal fire
Fix'd to those iron rocks that ever glow
With heat unquenchable, torment most dread !
That, wrapt in dunnest smoke, with dismal gleams
At intervals shows the red lake of hell !
While with th' effulgent glory of his Sire
Earth he transforms to heav'n, mankind to gods,
And, seraph-circled, reigns from pole to pole !

Hear now what I advise :—Let some bold pow'r,
For enterprise in hell's dark annals fam'd,
Seek out this royal shepherd, this half king,
And with ambitious emulation fill
His youthful bosom, fire his ardent soul,
On the red battle-plain to gain renown ;
And in his night-dreams lead him to Fame's shrine,
There show him war in all its mailed pomp,
The sun-reflecting shield, the gleaming brand,
The burnish'd gaveloc, the sparkling helm,
The hero's waving plumes, the victor's wreath,
And all the war-apparel of the field !—
Let the emblazon'd trophies of the fight,
Marshall'd by Vict'ry round her blood-dy'd car,
The soldiers' shouts that hail their chief's command,
The trumpet's blast, which, mix'd with dying groans,
Amid the far-resounding din of arms
Spurs on to deeds of fame ; the loud acclaim,
That tears heav'n's concave, of triumphant hosts,
When warlike fields are won, and bright renown
Green in her page inscribes their gloried deeds,
With all the splendors of triumphant pomp
That wait upon a kingly hero's car
Who moves in flaming mail, a demi-god
Amid adoring crowds and captive chiefs,
In fancy's dreams shine brightly in his eye
And vibrate on his ear ; and the rapt boy
Will straight forego his crook and simple scrip,

Lay by his harp, and drop the sylvan wreath,
To snatch the hostile spear, and quit the bow'r
Of blooming wild flow'rs for yon tents of war,
Where armed rank on rank the hour await
That yields them death or vict'ry; where, ye thrones,
We'll stimulate him on the listed plain
The champion to become for Israel's tribes,
And dare to arms the noble pride of Gath;
Then is his death most certain. Then, ye gods,
We triumph through long ages yet unborn,
And thus destroy this bruiser of thy head,
Great emperor! this Saviour of the world,
In mystic types and prophecies foretold,
By plucking up the grand imperial Root,
From which by fate primordial 'tis decreed
A Branch shall spring, whose boughs from sea to sea
Are in due time to spread, with fruit to heal
The nations of those wounds that sin has made,
And give them life eternal and divine."

Here paus'd the fiend, as seeking now applause.
For grace of action and persuasive tongue
Nor orator of ancient Greece, nor Rome,
The seat of eloquence, when in her height
Of pow'r and wide dominion, could compare
With this Adramelec. Scarce had he ceas'd
Ere the hoarse shouts of popular acclaim
Through all the deep recesses of the cave
Rebounded, louder than the frightful din

That once assail'd Ulysses, as his bark,
Illfated, pass'd Charybdis' horrid gulf;
While far without, o'er the tempestuous deep,
The noise was heard, tremendous as the groans
Of Etna or Vesuvius, ere their flames
With hell-like belchings burst into the skies,
Mingling in concert with the winds and waves.
A pause now stole between th' exhausted peals
Of oft-repeated plaudits, when the arm
Of Moloc, with a wafture that had spoke
Silence submiss through all the ranks of hell,
Marshall'd in warlike order, quick impos'd
A death-like stillness—not a sound was heard
Through all the murky den, where late so loud
Thunder'd full acclamations, as he thus :—

“ Mine be the task Anak's fam'd son to aid;
Amid the battle's rage I'll be his shield,
And nerve him with the vigour of a god!
He shall achieve such deeds, that Samson's pow'r
Compar'd to his a pigmy's might shall be!
Nor shall the fabled giants, who oppos'd
Olympian Jove, equal this man of Gath!
And thou, Adramelec, of lofty mien,
The genius of ambition, by whose aid
The tyrants of the earth make nations quake,
Be thine the glory to allure this youth,
This royal shepherd, with the martial glare
And splendour of the red embattled field,

To sure destruction's giddy precipice,
And mine to push him headlong down the steep !
Oh I shall feel a pleasure will repay
A thousand years of agony below,
To see this regal minstrel, this elect,
This new-anointed minion of the Highest,
The founder of a line of kings and gods,
Destin'd our hard-earn'd empire to o'erwhelm,
In his own blood embu'd, and left a feast
For trooping vultures and the prowling wolf !
Ye wizard tribes, who know the arts occult
Of midnight sorc'ry, and on dæmon wing
Visit the regions of the lucid moon,
No longer fear the dying pow'r of Saul,
Since GOD hath left him.—Soon this giant huge
The Israelites shall utterly destroy,
And root th' usurpers out from Palestine ;
Then, with augmented splendour, through the land
New fanes shall rise to us, the gods of earth !
Whose sky-invading pinnacles shall bear
Our ensigns of defiance to the heavens ;
There oracles responsive shall be heard,
And altars blaze with human sacrifice."

He ceas'd ; when instantly was heard to sound,
With furious blast, the magic horn that hung
Before the brazen valve, which open flew
With thund'ring crash discordant. Then was seen
Goliath fell, of Anak's giant race,

By Tartak led, foul dæmon of the isle,
The lofty portal ent'ring ; high his plumes
Wav'd on the blast that issued from the cave,
With sulphury vapour fraught. In brass yclad,
Bright battle harness, oft assay'd in fight,
Like the Colossus that bestrode the port
Of ancient Rhodes, he in the entrance stood,
Gazing as if awe-struck ! His orb'd shield
Gleam'd with the bright reflection of the flames
That from the altar rose, like a round bay
Land-lock'd from winds, whose glassy surface holds
A mirror to the red volcano's top,
Whence through the gloom of night the blaze ascends
Mid-way to heaven, and in the deep below
Streams with augmented horror. His tall spear,
Compar'd to which the Pelian jav'lin fam'd
Was but a reed, that on the river's brink
To the swift-passing breeze submissive bends,
Shook in his hand, encrusted deep with gore
Of heroes fall'n in battle. Thrice he bow'd
To Endor's dark-ey'd hag, who now advanc'd
To greet his entrance, and address'd him thus :—

“ Hail ! son of Anak ! champion great of Gath !
Whose high achievements on the martial plain
Shall ever live green in the page of fame,
We laud thy noble daring, that has sought
Admission to this secret cave, where we
Our dark nocturnal orgies celebrate ;

Where witchcraft with mysterious rites repairs,
When tell-tale day forsakes the blushing skies,
Her oracles immortal to consult,
And with undazzled eye the tablets read
Of veil'd futurity. See, mighty chief,
The haggard sisters with accordant soul
Are in full council met to aid thy cause?
Others, of greater pow'r, dominions, thrones,
Virtues, and pryncedoms, are assembled here,
Though to thy eyes, untouch'd with magic drops
Distill'd by sorcery from Acheron's stream,
Invisible. Approach, victorious chief,
Yon blazing altar ; there will I, the queen
Of witchcraft, render thee invulnerable !”

To whom the son of Anak : “ Thy renown
In necromancy and in prescience rare,
Surpassing all the Memphian wizards fam'd,
And sages of Chaldea, is far spread
Through Canaan and Philistia to the sea.
'Tis said that thou canst pluck fair Luna's lamp
Out of the ebon hand of frightened Night,
And hide it in the ocean's secret deeps ;
That with the smoke of hell thou canst bedim
The sick'ning Sun, and rob him of his beams ;
Where with the green wave ether softly blends,
Set discord to stir up the ruffian winds,
And raise a war of elemental strife ;
That with thy thunder thou canst wake the dead,

And raise the shiv'ring spectre from the tomb ;
Call up the gods of darkness, and compel
Spirits of earth and air to do thy work.
Therefore have I thy isle enchanted sought,
And o'er the deep, amid nocturnal storms,
With yon grim ferryman undaunted rode,
To seek thy aid against fam'd Israel's God,
Whose wond'rous pow'r the nations round have felt,
And learn th' event of this protracted war."

To whom the haggard sorc'ress thus replied :—
" Thy wish, ere nam'd, was granted ; to that end
Are we here congregated. From this field,
Where thy dread form the bellowing voice of war
Strikes mute with fear as the still noon of night,
And boastful valour drops the bloodless spear,
Shalt thou pluck vict'ry's laurels ; we, the flow'rs
Of sweet revenge on Israel and her king !
Bring here, enchantress call'd of Hinnom's vale,
That fire-wing'd serpent which thou brought'st with thee
From Ophiode's isle, and with the carcasses
Of Anthropophagi by midnight fed,
That we may offer at this magic shrine,
To our great masters, his envenom'd blood,
With all dark sorc'ry's sacrificial rites."

Now of the vale of giants the grim witch
Mov'd to th' interior cavern's deep recess,
But soon return'd, when round her skinny arms
Was coil'd a most horrific monster fierce,

Of serpent kind, with wings that seem'd of fire :
A shaggy mane crested his motley neck,
And from his eyes of flaming carbuncle
Around the hag a frightful radiance gleam'd.
The altar she approach'd, when Endor's witch,
Sprinkling his glossy folds with hellish lymph,
And mutt'ring charms unutterably dread,
With golden knife the monster to the throat
Up-ripp'd, and cast him on the altar's coals ;
Bath'd in black blood, amidst the flames he writh'd
With hisses horrible till fire-consum'd,
While round th' infernal sacrifice the hags
With laughing devils danc'd to mystic sounds.

The music ceas'd, and Endor thus began :—
“ Warrior of Gath, make thou oblation now
To him who will thy guardian genius be
In Elah's fields, that he thy brow may crown
With wreaths immortal, won by victory.
Let me this drop on thy dark eyelids cast,
And he shall be embodied to thy sight.”
Her wither'd finger now his eyelid touch'd,
When instantly before him stood, array'd
In all his war-apparel, Moloc, fierce
As when he fought in heav'n. His panoply
Like burning iron glow'd, and pierc'd the gloom
Of the wide cave with streams of crimson light ;
His breast-plate cast such vivid blazes forth,
As mountain forests, when in flames involv'd

They o'er the mantle of affrighted night,
Gilding the skies, a horrid lustre shed ;
His buckler seem'd the Sun, as he appears
To Merc'ry's nearer regions at the hour
Of cloudless noon ; while his dread helm sent forth
A flood of fire, that wav'd around his head
Terrific as the bick'ring spires which crown
The cloud-encompass'd brows of Etna, wrapt
In winter's midnight storms. 'Twas now that fear
First spread her ashy colour o'er the cheek
Of proud Goliath, styl'd Invincible,
And froze the courage of his heart to ice,
As he some paces started back aghast,
While all his clatt'ring mail with trembling rung.
Nor did he dare to lift a second time
To the Gorgonian visage of the fiend
His fearful eye. Dismay'd, he shudd'ring bow'd,
With downcast look ; nor in the battle gear
Of the huge Atlantëan dæmon, which
Far brighter than the shield of Pallas shone,
That she, as poets dream, to Perseus gave,
Saw the reflection of his pigmy form,
Which seem'd a frightened infant's, standing 'neath
A lofty tow'r in flames.

“ Bring hither,” cried
The wild Circëan queen of witchery
To one of her black sisterhood, who stood
Nursing upon her haggard breast a toad,

“ The infant which last night I stole away
From a fond Hebrew matron while she slept.”
The infant soon was brought ; in tears it mourn’d
The absence of its tender mother dear,
Who wept its loss, unconscious of its fate.
Not lovelier looks the rosy morn of Spring
When sprinkled by the balmy dews of May,
Than this sweet child, as in the bosom fell
Of the dark hag of witchery accurs’d
It hid its beauteous face, suffus’d with tears.
Then Endor to the giant : “ Take this brat ;
Thy guardian Moloc claims it at thy hands,
An off’ring grateful to the god of war.”
So saying, from her sister’s arms she snatch’d
The shrieking infant, and with dæmon grin
Bid the Philistine cast it in the flames !
A transient pang of pity smote his heart
As the sweet babe lifted its tearful eye
In supplication to him, and with screams
Shrunk from the sparkling fire : but soon the thought
Of conquest, fame, and glory, fill’d his soul,
And thrust out faint compassion. Mid the flames,
Oh horrid, horrid deed ! he threw the child !
With nostrils wide distended, the curs’d fiend,
Like a fell vulture o’er th’ embattled plain,
Scented the grateful fumes of human blood,
And, pleas’d to hear the music of its cries,
By cymbal, drum, or braying trump undrown’d,

With 'ghastly smiles his visage wrinkled deep
As the poor babe in agonies expir'd !

Now rolling thunders swell'd along the vault,
And darkness grew more dark. A flaming hand
From a thick cloud, blacker than Egypt's night,
The warrior-giant's brazen arms unclasp'd,
Which to the ground with clanging clamour fell.
The magic hand in bright chalybeate mail,
With glitt'ring casque, o'er which wav'd eagle plumes,
And massy shield of seven-times folded gold,
This giant Mars of Gath sublimely clad.
The spell-wrought metal o'er the heavy gloom
Effulgence keener shot than lightning gleams
Through tempests bluely blazing, and his targe
Shone from afar, as if the sun had broke
In all his radiant fulness through the rocks
That canopied the cavern ; while his brand,
With hilt of carbuncle and massy gold,
As from the womb of darkness, self-impell'd,
It tow'rd Goliath mov'd, begirt with rays
Of varied tints full horribly august,
Glar'd like a fiery torrent rolling down
The smoke-clad mountain steeps of Strombolo,
At which the mariners affrighted gaze,
While on the helm they lean, and call the winds
To speed them safely o'er the midnight deep.
Armour of proof, and deem'd invincible
As that which for Achilles Mulciber,

At the request of Thetis, once did forge
On the Liparean isles, and dipp'd in Styx.
And now of Endor she th' enchantress flings,
O'er all the war-apparel of the chief,
Plutonian lymph of twice a thousand spells,
That he may in the battle-storm become
To arrow, sword, and lance, invulnerable.
Loud and more loud the rattling thunder roars,
And, with the swelling chorus of the hags,
Mingles sublimely dreadful. The faint flame
That quiver'd on the infant's smoking bones,
With sounds unheard before by mortal ear,
Expires. Cave, altar, monsters, hags, and fiends,
Wrapt in a sheeted blaze, now vanish'd all,
And left the giant on the sounding shore,
Upon whose cliffs the worn-out tempest died;
And morning's twinkling star, with feeble ray,
Peep'd through the storm-rent clouds as the stern voice
Of the grim-visag'd fiend bade him embark.

END OF BOOK I.

THE ROYAL MINSTREL.

BOOK II.

THE ARGUMENT.

Morning—David leads his flock into the vale of Bethlehem—his matin hymn—Abdiel, his guardian spirit, descends from heaven, and in the form of Elhanan enters David's bower; exhorts him to join the army of Saul, and informs him of Goliath's daily challenge—David resolves to solicit his father's permission to go to the camp of Israel—Abdiel quits him, and reascends to heaven—Jesse visits his son, and tells him 'tis his desire that he should go to the camp to carry presents to his brethren, but requests he will first relate to him his last night's dream—David complies, and then sets forward to visit the camp of Israel.

THE ROYAL MINSTREL.

BOOK II.

THE smiling Hours the lamp of Lucifer,^d
Dimpling the western sky, had now put out,
And op'd the crimson curtains of the Morn,
Who, rob'd in mantle blue, with roses fring'd,
Stepp'd o'er the orient mountains with fresh tints
To paint the dew-bath'd flow'rs, and from her urn
Flung balmy odours to the new-born breeze,
That panted on her bosom ; when, with step
Lightsome and blithe, young David from the fold
His snow-white ewes and playful lambs unpenn'd,
To crop the fragrant herbage of the vale.
The rose of health mantled his beauteous cheek,
And o'er his alabaster forehead, where
Majestic dignity with grace sat thron'd,
Th' Hyperion curls of youth fell wantonly
In fair luxuriance, while in form he seem'd

More lovely than Adonis, or that swain
Endymion call'd—Fluonia's favourite boy ;
To whom Dictynna, on a moonbeam hors'd,
Paid nightly visits on mount Latmus' top.
And now a lily of the vale he pluck'd,
That by the streamlet grew ; its mirror bright
Reflected nobler beauty than that fount
O'er which Narcissus languishingly gaz'd,
And sigh'd himself into a golden flow'r.
But David, wrapt in contemplation deep,
The wat'ry shadow heeded not, nor heard
Th' enamour'd zephyr's sigh, as with its kiss
It ruffled the clear bosom of the stream,
Till the reflection faded. On he mov'd
To a retired bow'r, his daily haunt,
There on the harp to chant a morning hymn,
As was his wonted custom. Round him now,
Through all the vale, which might with *Tempé vie*,
That fabled haunt of gods, from ev'ry grove
The woodland minstrelsy rose wildly sweet,
The matin song of Nature to her God ;
While gales Elysian, from their silken wings
Sabæan odours shedding, fann'd the leaves,
Which danc'd on air to see the laughing Sun
Ascend his chariot from a golden cloud,
And fling celestial splendours o'er the world.

Amid the dale, fed by shade-wimples brooks,
A limpid lake its shining waters spread,

On whose dew-spangled bank, damask'd with flow'rs,
Olive and citron groves luxuriant bloom'd,
That seem'd Hesperian gardens. On each lawn
Of intervening green, with cowslips deck'd,
Close bow'rs of blowing woodbine and sweet nard
Shelter'd the shepherd and the blue-eyed nymph
From noontide beam; where lovelorn nightingales
Charm'd moonlight with their soft melodious plaints.
Clear shone the azure canopy above,
With here and there a cloud of beauteous hue,
As if some genius of the vale had left
His sky-wrought mantle floating on the winds.
Here tended Hebron's destin'd king his flocks,
And tun'd his harp to sweeter sounds and themes
Than fam'd Apollo on Amphrisus' banks,
Where in disguise he kept Admetus' sheep.

His fav'rite bow'r the royal shepherd gain'd,
And from the myrtle boughs his lyre displac'd,
To whose mild strains the hours and wood-nymphs danc'd,
And morning smil'd delighted;—while his flock
Disported on the blue lake's mossy brink,
Or ruminated couchant round the bow'r
On beds of scented vi'lets. Now the chords
His flying fingers with Orphëan skill
Touch'd so divinely sweet, as never yet
Minstrel of fabled fame such sounds could strike
From mortal strings. Not he who rais'd the tow'rs,

By music's fascination, of old Thebes,
Nor yet Aspendus, of the harpers soft
The softest that the mellow'd wires ere touch'd,
Could equal Sion's hero, who thus wak'd
The babbling echoes dancing o'er the mere.

“ Hail to the living God! who bids the morn
With fragrant flow'rs of sweetly-varied hue
My paths adorn, and with her balmy breath,
The flutt'ring infant breezes to perfume, .
That fan the woods, and whisper through the groves.
All praise to Him who will my shepherd be,
And crown me with felicity divine.

'Tis He, who to these pastures deck'd so gay,
And verdant shades, my footsteps gently guides :
Where through the alleys green of cedars tall
Clear-falling streamlets glitter to the sun,
And the full chorus of a thousand notes
Swell musical upon the list'ning ear.

'Tis He, who, as I on this mossy bank
With vi'lets show'r'd, recline, my harp to tune,
That sounds in concert with the chiming flood
Which down yon white cascade wild-warbling falls,
Doth bid young Zephyr fan my glowing cheek,
As o'er the strings at ev'ry pause he sweeps
His scented wing, and to my morning song
An airy echo forms, more soft and sweet
Than is the youthful nightingale's first lay.

Soft breathes from yonder bow'r the shepherd's reed,
While with their canticles the painted birds
The King of Heav'n salute; and ev'ry flow'r
The tribute of its balmy incense sends
To yon bright skies, borne upward by the winds
Like that blest sacrifice th' Eternal loves,
Which on the secret altar of the heart
Virtue in silence offers to her God.
Though through the valley of the shades of death,
Where dangers lurk, my pilgrim steps should rove,
Yet, by thy staff supported, while I live
The pleasing wonders of thy love I'll sing,
Fearless of foeman's spear, or dæmon's rage.
Welcome, thou lovely vale, in whose green lap
The pregnant seasons cast their choicest stores;
Here, far from proud ambition's dang'rous heights,
From courts, and regal halls of martial pomp,
In some lone bow'r or grove where turtles wail,
I tune my harp, that Echo loves to mock
As o'er the moonlight hill she whisp'ring strays,
And with my sire a shepherd-boy abide.
Come, sweet content, companion thou my steps,
And then to me these gently-waving woods,
That to the passing gales so graceful bend,
Will look more lovely than the warrior's plumes,
Nodding his steely sparkling casque above;
These bow'rs, in roses drest, more gay appear

Than martial chieftains clad in burnish'd gold,
And all the proud habiliments of war;
These greenwood shades by moonbeams lighted up,
Forming a temple hung with starry lamps,
Where Nature silent homage pays her God,
And nightingales their warbled descant pour,
More noble seem than sumptuous halls of state,
With banners, shields, and gleaming war-gear deck'd,
Through which the harp, shrill-sounding, fires the souls
Of wine-cheer'd warriors at the splendid feast.
O King of Glory! mighty Lord of Hosts!
On yonder battle-plain thy pow'r display,
Fight for thy chosen race, through all the ranks
Of the Philistines thy hot lightnings shoot,
And lay their proudest heroes in the dust!—
Then shall I teach these strings fresh notes of praise
And the glad song of Israel's triumph sing."

The minstrel ceas'd—yet still the mimic voice
Of Echo, sweetest maid of all the nymphs
That ever dwelt in bow'r or fairy grove,
Lisp'd to the list'ning shades the closing strain,
'Till with the musky kisses of the winds
She fainting died away. When on a cloud,
Hemm'd with the scarf of Iris, by the bow'r
Descended Abdiel;^c of young David, he
Th' attendant spirit was; his robes laid by,
Of azure-tinctur'd die, he now assumes

The form of David's friend, Elhanan brave,
The son of Dodo, who of Bethlem was,
And now with Saul in Elah's vale encamp'd.
The youthful chief, as he with look sublime
To David's gaze appears, enters the bow'r,
And thus the blooming bard of heav'n accosts :—

“ Why sitt'st thou here in these inglorious shades,
Wasting in indolence inept thy hours,
When Israel and her monarch are in arms ?
Shame on thee ! throw aside that idle harp,
And seize the spear of war ! no longer soothe
The nymphs and shepherds with love's melting strains
In these delicious bow'rs of slothful ease,
But listen to the trumpet's martial clang,
And the fierce din of close-contending hosts !
Hear thy affrighted country, how she calls
On all her gallant sons to flock around
Her ensigns, waving on yon battle-plain,
And save her from th' invading heathen's rage !
Then quit these soft'ning scenes, nor loiter here.
Hence to yon camp, where ev'ry warrior burns
With patriot fire to charge th' insulting foe !
Gird on thy sword, list in this holy war ;
Thy God, religion, and thy native land,
Now call thee hence to Elah's tented vale ! ”

To whom thus David : “ Valiant friend, think not
By choice I linger here in these dull shades,

Content to be obscure ; my spirit burns
To view the royal camp, behold my king
Marshal in glitt'ring mail his shouting hosts,
To see the banners of my native land
Float proudly on the loving winds of heav'n,
To grasp the blood-tipt spear, behold the blaze
Of burnish'd shields and all the proud array
Of plumed war with sun-reflected gleams
Flash on my sight and gild the tented field ;
To hear the clashing steel, the deep-mouth'd clang
Of battle's minstrelsy, with all the rout
And madd'ning hurly of tumultuous fight ;
Yet here I stay, unknowing and unknown,
To cheer the twilight evening of my sire,
And for his sake submit to the dull round
A shepherd's life affords ; and in this vale
Attend his fleecy flocks, till heav'n's high will
Shall call me forth to deeds of glorious fame."

The angel thus : " The time is come, my friend,
The Highest calls thee now ; not in the small
Still voice with which he call'd to Israel's seer,
Prophetic Samuel, but i' th' trumpet's blast,
And all the deaf'ning thunder of fierce war ! "

" O, brave Elhanan, thou hast stirr'd my soul ! "
Cried David, as with eye of fire he rose,
And threw his harp aside—" O, how I long
To mingle in the fray ! My spirit pants

This arm's unpractis'd strength to prove in fight,
To stain my maiden mail in heathen blood,
To flesh my glave, in battle ne'er assay'd,
And reap the glories of a well-fought field!
Methinks I hear th' insulting heathen's shout
Lifting the azure vault—while every breeze
Wafts to my tortur'd ear my country's groans!
O, that this arm alone could vindicate
Her righteous cause, could save her from the rage
Of those who seek her altar's overthrow,
And the religion of the living God
Blasphemously subvert! O, that the Lord
Had set but me apart, like Manoah's son,
To be my country's hero, and to crush
With single arm, endow'd with God's own might,
Her foes idolatrous!—then would I rush
To Elah's vale, champion Philistia's host
To fierce encounter, and th' ensanguin'd fields
Of Ephes-dammim with their bodies strew—
A feast for midnight wolves and gorging kites.
But tell me, O my friend, for I've not heard
Aught from the camp, the fortune of the war."

Then Abdiel, smiling, answered: "Noble youth,
That ardour which doth show thou art not lost
Yet to thy country, merits well my tale:
In the Philistines' tents, among their chiefs,
There is a giant, great Goliath call'd,

Who ev'ry morning, as the royal Saul
Marshals the host of Israel, with fierce pride
And trumpet of defiance, herald blown,
Betwixt the armies stalks the valley's bounds,
Off'ring the long-protracted war to end
By single combat with the bravest chief
The camp of Israel boasts."—David exclaims,
"Who is the man of noble hardiment
Among her armed tribes, scorning to fear,
That will accept the challenge of this foe,
And, girded with the might of heav'n, go forth
His country's brave defender; and, to proof
Of deadly arms daring th' insulter base,
Wash with his blood our foul reproach away?
O, how I envy him, whoe'er he be,
The vast renown of chivalry so high,
Of brav'ry so illustrious! His great name
With golden characters shall be emblaz'd,
Bright and unfading as the day-star's beam,
In the eternal chronicles of fame,
And call'd—O, title nobler, worthier far
Than royalty with all her pride can give—
The great protector of his native land!"

"Such is the giant stature, such the might,"
Returned Abdiel, "such the vaunted arms
Of this huge son of Anak; steel-encas'd,
That not a warrior in the camp of Saul

Has yet been found hardy enough to meet
The haughty boaster at the war-blade's point ;
Though to the man who will go boldly forth,
His country loving dearer than his life,
From Israel's tents, and in the giant's teeth
Defiance hurling, dare him to the fight,
Pluck vict'ry's garland from the brazen casque
Of the proud vaunter, and God's chosen save,
The king has offer'd bounty so profuse,
Rewards so splendid, as might e'en inspire
The lowest in the ranks with nobler flame
Than fill'd the bosom of the bravest chief
For ancient fame recorded ; no less prize
Awaits the gallant conq'ror, than the hand
Of the fair princess, daughter to the king !”

To whom thus David, with new-lighted eye :
“ What ! she on whom so oft I've fondly gaz'd
With reverential love and tender awe,
Bord'ring on adoration, when I dwelt
A minstrel at the palace of her sire ?
She, who so oft would listen to my harp,
And when I sung a tale of hapless love
Would bid me touch again the warbled strings
To the same tender air, 'till pity's tear
Embalm'd the living bloom of her soft cheek,
Lovely as Sharon's roses wash'd in dew !
Is there not one in Israel to be found

Whom such exalted beauty can inspire
To enterprise and fame? Though patriot zeal,
Though love to God and his religious rites
Be quite extinct through all the Hebrew host,
Yet surely some at beauty's shrine would light
Their dying valour, and with dauntless soul
Rush through ten thousand dangers to her arms!
Not one, proud Dagon's worshipper to foil?
How are the mighty fall'n! How past away
Thy glory, Israel! O, how art thou sunk!
Where is the spirit of thy chiefs of old,
Brave Joshua's zeal and Gideon's noble fire,
That this uncircumsis'd Philistine thus
Should brave the armies of the living God?
O, Jonathan! pale looks thy valour now,
That wrought at Seneh's rock such wond'rous deeds!
And thou, O Saul, how tarnish'd is thy fame,
How wither'd all the laurels on thy brow!
O, my Elhanan! I begin to feel
A noble ardour, not to be subdu'd,
And deeds of glory but in embryo fill
My throbbing heart with strange and new delight!
I'll to my rev'rend sire, and on my knees
Crave his permission to forsake the roof
Of fond paternal care, and join my king."

"The God of battle, living Lord of hosts,
Inspire thee," said the angel, "to become

His people's champion in th' embattled field ;
And be for thee reserv'd the bright renown
Of Israel's great deliv'rance ! Fare thee well !
To camp I must return, where soon I hope
To see thee shine in all the pride of arms,
And hear thy grateful country's shouts proclaim
The triumphs of thy vict'ry o'er their foe."
So saying, Abdiel quitted David's bow'r,
And, by impervious shades now quite conceal'd,
Resum'd his shape ethereal, and enwrapt
His radiant form in the gay fleecy folds
Of an empurpled cloud, then upward soar'd
With wing outstretch'd to heav'n, his native seat.

With eye serene stood David by the bow'r,
On the dark-shaded vista gazing, where
The downy plumes that nodded on the helm
Of Abdiel faded from his eager sight,
And thus began : " GOD of my fathers ! who
For them such wondrous miracles hast wrought,
The humblest of thy servants, me, accept
For the deliv'rer of thy chosen race !
O teach these hands to war, these arms to fight,
For thee, my GOD, against the worshippers
Of hated idols, whom I've ne'er invok'd,
Nor on their vile dæmonian altars pour'd,
With impious rites, their offerings of blood.
For something great thou hast design'd me, Lord,

Or venerable Samuel on my head
The sacred unction had not pour'd, that mark
Of future royalty! Who knows but God
May gird me with his everlasting strength
(For nothing is to Him impossible;)
In my left hand place bright salvation's shield,
And the keen sword of justice in my right;
So that this huge idolater of Gath,
Shall be o'erthrown, and fall beneath my feet.
Then will the haughty heathen fade away,
And tremble in their brazen tow'rs of strength,
While heav'n's eternal ONE shall me exalt
To be a chief in Israel; nay, to be
By marriage rites the king's own honour'd son!
T' espouse—O, rapt'rous thought! expressless joy—
The beauteous princess, on whose peerless charms
So oft I've wish'd to feast my ardent sight,
With look more stedfast than the gazing moon
Casts on th' unruffled lake, till with a sigh
I've check'd the fond presumption! O, ye thoughts,
To what a giddy height ye've lifted me!
I feel new hopes, new pow'rs, new ardours, spring
In my rapt bosom, never felt before!
Emprises great, though now but in the bud,
Yet to anticipation's ardent eye
Beneath fair glory's splendour-darting sun,
Their blossoms in perfection spreading bright,

Make my warm pulse to throb with joy so great,
That all the gay magnificence and pomp,
Which in my night-dreams mimic fancy paints,
In bright realities before me pass !
Pleas'd nature smiles, the sun more glorious shines,
While earth and heav'n salute me conqueror !
But see my sire ! his wish'd-for presence now
Completes my joy.—Thy blessing let me crave.”
The youth sunk on his knee, as Jesse nigh'd,
With silver locks white as the mountain snow,
The green alcove—when thus the good old man :
“ Thou best-lov'd son, thou blossom of my hopes !
O, may the heav'ns their benedictions show'r
Benign and num'rous on thy youthful head,
As the bright dew-drops of the vernal morn
On the bespangled flow'rets of the vale !
But whence this more than usual glow of health,
This agitating hurry and alarm
Which light thine eye-balls with unwonted fires ?
Has the fierce mountain pard assail'd the flock ?
Or the gruff bear purloin'd a tender lamb
From yonder wattled cot ?—Then 'tis, perhaps,
Th' oppressive heat and splendour of the sun
That flush thy features ? But, my age's staff,
I would employ thee in a diff'rent sphere,
A scene more suited to thy ardent mind,
Than these retired groves of shade obscure.

Then go, my son, and visitation pay
To thy lov'd brethren in the royal camp;
Bear them my blessing, with it such plain fare
As best befits their fortune, and present
A poor, but grateful, present from my store
To their fam'd captain, Azereel the brave.
I see the task delights thee, pleasure's beam
With still augmented fire illumines thine eye,
And exultation spreads beneath the down
Of thy young cheek where blooms expression's rose,
The vermeil tincture of the glowing morn."

"O, my lov'd sire!" exclaim'd th' enraptur'd youth,
"My fondest wish you grant e'en ere I dar'd
To breathe the steady purpose of my soul—
(Yet let me hide what swells my lab'ring heart,
Lest he should think presumptuous all my hopes,
But ah! the more my joy I strive to hide,
The brighter flames my ardour) — Sire rever'd,
Farewell! awhile I leave you, but may God,
The living God, whom I devoutly serve,
My ardent pray'rs now hear, and send me back
A thousand times more worthy of your love."

"Stay, dearest son," said Jesse, "I would ask
Why move thy steps as though thou wouldst outstrip
The fleeting winds? and what that vision was,
Which at the silent hour of yesternight
Paid visitation to thy drowsy couch,

Of which thou promis'dst me I should be told
When thou return'dst from feeding of thy flocks ?”

“ The wish t' embrace,” replied the blooming bard,
“ My brothers, and to learn how speed the arms
Of royal Saul ; to view th' embattled field,
Where din of arms and deeds of bold emprise,
To rapture hurrying my delighted sense,
Will all be charming novelty, now prompt
My speed from these dull shades, making my heels
Light as the gossamer :—yet your behests
So much I rev'rence, you should e'en arrest
This arm uplifted to cut off the head
Of Gath's vain-glorious giant !”

Jesse thus :

“ Alas ! my son, what visionary flights
Possess thy waking thoughts ? Art dreaming still ?
The fairy fancies of thy midnight hours
Float on thy brain, and mar thy intellect !
Tell me, my son, again I charge thee, tell,
Ere thou depart'st, the visions of thy bed.”

“ This was my dream,” resum'd th' impatient son :
“ Methought, as through yon glen I drove my flock,
A winged messenger from heav'n appear'd,
And bade me his resplendent car ascend,
That seem'd of shining beryl set in gold ;
Which when I enter'd an ethereal cloud,
Ting'd like the rainbow, and with scents perfum'd, .

Sweeter than spikenard, cinnamon, or myrrh,
Envelop'd us ; then gently did we sail
Upon the bosom of the ambient air.
Short was our voy'ge ; with speed exceeding thought
We reach'd a lofty mountain, round whose sides
Unnumber'd multitudes with anxious toil
Were climbing, but with labour lost to all
Except a favour'd few, who gain'd its height.
A thousand dangers, difficulties, toils,
On ev'ry side hemm'd the stupendous hill.
Some over dizzy precipices fell,
And rose no more ; others, who just had reach'd
The happy bow'r of rest, half up the steep,
And swell'd, elate with joy, to see their height
So far above the grøv'ling herd below, •
When seeming most secure, were from their seat
By envy to the distant bottom hurl'd,
Their labours to renew ! Some, who had strove
In vain to reach the lowest eminence,
Return'd into the vale ; while many sat
On elevated banks of herbs and flow'rs,
Shelter'd by groves of laurel, garland-hung,
Which their own hands had planted ; there, secure
From the rude pelting of the storms that howl'd
The mountain round, they to the dulcet harp
Sung of their folly, who above them climb'd.
“ Thou seest the labour, said my angel guide,

That merit finds to gain yon dazzling height ;
Thy happier lot lifts thee above these cares,
And thus with ease we reach the envied point.
So saying, we, methought, with instant spring
Upmounting, like a spark from furnace mouth,
Achiev'd the summit high. But who can paint
In language semblable the blissful scene
That now at once burst on my raptur'd sight !
Delightful groves bedeck'd with Eden's flow'rs,
And fruit ambrosial bright of living gold,
Rose proudly round me, and forbad the beams
Of an unclouded sun the honied dews
To drink from beds of cassia, nard, and balm,
Which spread their odours to the gales beneath.
Immortal roses damask'd all the bow'rs,
That seem'd the haunt of gods and spirits blest ;
While gently-waving winds, with all the spoils
Of blest Arabia on their musky wings,
Warbled such music through the greenwood shades
As never mortal touch, the most refin'd,
From harp or pipe could draw. Here nectar'd streams
With silver murmur roll'd o'er coral rocks,
And there with waves expanded to a lake,
Slumber'd upon their golden-sanded shore.
A thousand flow'rs of azure, crimson, gold,
And tints of heav'nly die, emboss'd the fields
That parted groves of cinnamon and myrrh.

In these delicious shades wander'd the sons
Of virtue, all in shining robes yclad,
Who, with advent'rous peril and hard toil,
Had reach'd the temple of immortal Fame;
For so I learnt was call'd the splendid dome
That rose on lucid columns 'mid the groves.
' Loiter not here,' said my transcendent guide,
' Far nobler scenes await thy raptur'd gaze.'
With that my hand he seiz'd, and led me on,
Until we reach'd the fane sublime, august,
Of fair renown. But how shall I express
The sumptuous splendour of the glitt'ring pile!
Bright colonnades of sapphire shone around
The crystal mansion, and steps crysolite
Led to its ample gates of burnish'd gold,
Which on their magic hinges open flew,
With harmony of sounds most musical,
At our approach! We enter'd now the hall;
Where, on a throne of flaming carbuncle,
That cast a blaze celestial round the walls,
Which sparkled with ten thousand precious gems
Of azure, green, and purple ray serene,
Sat the bright goddess Fame, enthron'd in state.
Rumour, with all her nymphs of various tongue,
Attended her; and thro' the grand saloon
Heroes and counsellors, mighty chiefs and bards,
Kings, pontiffs, scribes, and sages of all tribes,

(For such my guide inform'd me was the crowd)
Pass'd onward to her shrine, and paid their vows.
And, as she mark'd their names and noble deeds
Upon the brazen tablets of renown,
A blast of martial sounds resounded loud
Throughout the vaulted halls and fretted dome,
Proclaiming them of glory deathless heirs !
Now at her throne my guide presented me,
When she with radiant smiles, divinely sweet,
Me thus saluted : ' Welcome, noble youth !
Behold yon splendid seat of royalty,
O'er which unnumber'd crowns with sun-bright rays
Hang glitt'ring ! 'Tis for thee, my son, reserv'd ;
My favourite, thou shalt be the founder fam'd
Of a long line of princes, whom those crowns
Wait with successive honours to adorn.
Assume the hero, meet thy country's foes,
Become her champion, mingle in the fray,
And be the leader of thy nation's hosts ;
Then shalt thou enter with triumphant pomp
These portals bright, and at my right hand reign.'
So saying, such a flood of dazzling light
She flung around me as entranc'd my soul,
Till, with an ecstasy so strange, I woke."

Such was the dream Adramelec pourtray'd
Of gay illusions and fantastic shapes
To David's mimic fancy, which in him

Might pride engender, and the wild-fire light . .
Of proud ambition ; whose deceitful glare
Would soon, he thought, allure the giddy youth
Eventually to ruin's fatal brink,
Like the night-wand'ring pilgrim on the moor,
Deluded by a vapour's dancing ray
To perilous edge of pool or boggy fen.

And now, with doubtful mind, Jesse replied :
“ Thy dream I fear, my son, is not from heav'n,
Nor by the ministry of angels wrought.
Mine is not a diviner's heav'nly art,
Nor science in deep myst'ries can I boast,
Yet do I think hell-gender'd is thy dream.
'Tis true the holy Samuel on thy head
Hath pour'd the sacred oil of royalty,
Yet let not pride and shallow-brain'd conceit
Urge thee to any enterprise or act
Ill-suited to thy inexperience'd youth,
To gain the plaudits of delusive fame.
If 'tis decreed that thou the tribes shalt rule,
May'st thou become the founder of a race,
Long, long and worthily to wear the crown !
God's will be done in all things ! and may He
Who thus hath chosen thee, protect thee still,
Pour every blessing on thee from on high,
And to these aged arms return thee safe ! ”
“ He is my buckler, and in Him I trust ;

Then fear not, for we soon shall meet again.

'Tis not man's praise my bosom pants to gain ;—

No, but to serve my country and my God,”

Cried the brave youth, as from his father's arms

He rush'd to battle and immortal fame.

So from its native rock at sunny noon

The new-fledg'd eaglet eyes the god of day,

And basks, undazzled, in his fulgent blaze ;

Then, its broad pinions flutt'ring, upward soars,

Outflies the winds, and mounts above the clouds.

“ He's gone !” said Jesse, as a mingled tear
Bedimm'd his feeble eye ; and, ere his hand

Could restoration to its vision give,

The evanescent form of his lov'd boy

Was lost in length'ning distance ; fill'd whereat

A second time his eye with sorrow drops,

While thus his oft sigh-broken moan began :—

“ Ah me, I've lost him quite ! I tremble now

To think what frightful dangers and mishaps

The noble daring of his soul, when rous'd

By all the pomp and stir of noisy war,

May plunge him into ; for, although so young,

He's valour's essence, and, when mov'd, will cope

E'en with the shaggy bear and spotted pard,

And fleece them of their skins. Yet gentle is

As the unweaned lamb ; in manners mild

As Jordan's stream, when, summer suns beneath,

It kisses, as it wanders, ev'ry flow'r
That on its green bank blows ; but, chaf'd, more rough
Than the Euphrates' flood, when winter storms
Mingle the mountain torrents with his waves,
And dash them roaring o'er his channel bounds.
Ah me, my son, why did I send thee hence ?
Safety and peace are here ; but carnage, death,
And all the blood-stain'd fiends of slaughter, stalk
Across the hostile field, and claim their prey.
Already three brave youths, sprung from my loins,
Fight in their country's cause :—Save them, O God,
From death's red spear, and from captivity !
Why did I send my youngest, best lov'd ?
Yet cease these fears, my heart ; the Lord of Hosts
Is ever omnipresent, and enshields
Those who in Him confide, amid the rage
And murd'rous devastation of the fight,
As in the tranquil shades of gentle peace.
And that same God, who to old Jacob's arms
Restor'd his long-lost Joseph, will preserve
My best lov'd son, though dangers him surround,
And yield him to my fond embrace again,
Perchance with new-crown'd honours !”

Here now sigh'd

The venerable Jesse as he lean'd
On his white staff, and cast a tearful look
Towards the lonely bow'r, where he so oft

Had pass'd the sultry noon with his lov'd boy.
But he was gone ! and mute was ev'ry bird
That morn and ev'ning warbled to his harp ;
They too his absence mourn'd. With pensive step
The old man turn'd, and sought his humble home.

With anxious eye thus the fond parent bird
Beholds her new-fledg'd young their plumage try,
Till, with their airy bounds from spray to spray
Well pleas'd, a loftier soar they now attempt,
And, bolder grown, forsake their native nest ;
In vain with quiv'ring wing she calls them back,
And all in vain her warbled lullaby
She with her more than wonted softness sings.
Of dangers reckless, on they speed their flight,
Delighted with the laughing landscape's charms ;
Nor to her throbbing breast till night return.

• END OF BOOK II. •

THE ROYAL MINSTREL.

BOOK III.

THE ARGUMENT.

Saul, king of Israel, marshals the Hebrew host in the vale of Elah—the Philistines set themselves in battle array, and both armies shout for the onset as David enters the camp—his feelings not to be described at his first seeing the embattled field—Goliath comes from the Philistine ranks, and challenges the host of Israel—David desires to be brought before Saul—the king is at first doubtful, but, won by David's wisdom and confidence in God, sends him to fight with the giant—he meets him unarmed, is despised by him, but in the end kills him with a sling and stone, strips him of his boasted armour, cuts off his head, and bears it in triumph to the tent of Saul.

THE ROYAL MINSTREL.

BOOK III.

O for the muse that swept the golden strings
Of the fam'd harp of blind Mæonides !
Or for her fire, and energy sublime,
Whose heav'n-plum'd wing with sounds celestial struck
Miltonian chords to the delighted spheres !
O, sacred Wisdom ! heav'n-descended maid !
Of essence co-eternal with the Highest,
Who quaff'st inspiring draughts from other streams
Than flow' from Aganippes' crystal fount,
Or the Castalian spring that at the foot
Of proud Parnassus flows, the drink of bards,
And tun'st thy lyre in amaranthine shades
Far higher than Olympus, or the hill
Of the Aonides—be thou my muse.
O condescend to visit me at eve,
In twilight bow'r, or moon-illumin'd grove,
Far from the world, and all its noisy mirth ;
Not on fam'd Pegasus, but on a beam

Effulgent hors'd of thy eternal light,
While the nocturnal bird of sweetest note
Her warbled tale rehearses to the moon.
O, wouldst thou deign, celestial queen of song,
To leave immortal splendours, and the hymns
Of circling seraphim and choirs divine,
And visit an illfated minstrel's bow'r,
Who scarce can strike with uninspired hand
One chord melodious to the ear of taste!
Presumptuous wish—it will not, must not be!—
Mischance, with iron fingers, sweeps the strings,
And sounds of discord fright the heav'n-born maid
Far from obscurity's low hermitage.
Then cast aside thy inharmonious harp,
Untun'd and harsh. For ah, thy friend is dead—
The sole Mæcenas of thy humble song!
And who shall listen to its wild notes now?
Yet at his early tomb thy oaten reed
Hath mourn'd his sudden flight with simple sounds,
And cadence plaintive as the redbreast's lay
On summer's leaf-strew'd grave; and his cold hearse
Scatter'd with flow'rs, perfum'd with the fond sigh
Of sacred friendship, and bedew'd with tears.
Let me not touch again, that painful theme,
Or grief down dark oblivion's gulf will fling
My harp, and bid me wake its strings no more.
Now from the crimson curtains of his tent
Came forth, in gorgeous steel proudly array'd,

The royal Saul; around him closely throng'd
The princes and the chiefs of ev'ry tribe,
Captains of thousands, and their heralds brave;
And now each armed wing and phalanx firm
Had left their tents, and on the plain appear'd,
Waiting the orders of their lord the king.
Onward he mov'd, and, high advanc'd in air,
Waving defiance to Philistia's lords,
His ensign shone with trophies he had gain'd
From Nahash, Edom, Zobah, Amalek,
Ammon, and Möab, in the fields of fame.
From line to line the royal warrior went,
And marshall'd each division of his host
That hemm'd him round with gleaming spear and shield,
On which the sun impress'd his hottest beams,
Proud of the bright reflection. But above
His mightiest heroes shone the sparkling plumes
Of noble Saul, who like a cedar seem'd,
Waving amid the storm-assaulted woods.
Nor idly stood on th' other side the vale
The leaders of Philistia's numerous host,
Forward they march'd their centre rank on rank,
Archers and cuirassiers embattled close;
While, harness'd for the fight, mov'd on each wing
Chariots, and flaming horsemen clad in steel.
Both armies, parted by the narrow stream
That ran with fearful haste through Elah's vale,
Stood in battalia fierce. Now van to van,

Thick set with serried shields and falchions bright,
In opposition horrid, yet august,
A dreadful war-blaze on each other flash'd.
As when two thunder clouds in mid-heav'n met,
Against each other darting flame-wing'd bolts,
Make earth and ocean shake beneath their roar ;
So trembled now the hills and mountains round
With the hoarse shouts of these opposing hosts,
Impatient for the onset. Then it was
That David pass'd th' entrenchments of the camp,
And started with amaze to hear the clang
Of sounding shields and the shrill trumpet's voice.
But who th' emotions of his heart can paint
When first his eyes beheld th' embattled field
With close-rang'd squadrons cover'd, and bright troops
Of prancing horse in warlike equipage ;
When first the martial din of sword-clash'd shields,
Death menacing, vibrated on his ear ?
His presents with the carriage-keeper left,
Into the army, as if wing'd, he flew,
And, rank'd amid their thousand, soon he found
His elder brethren for the fight equipp'd :
But scarce had they fraternal sign exchang'd
Of brotherly regard, ere from the tents
Of the Philistines, with shrill-echoing blast
Of braying trump, defiance-breathing sound,
Goliath, call'd of Gath, with haughty stride
In kingly pomp advanc'd. Repeated shouts,

That drown'd the clarion's loud-symphonious voice,
To heav'n arose from Dagon's worshippers,
His proud appearance hailing as he mov'd
Betwixt the hostile files, full dreadfully
Magnificent in arms : his tow'ring plumes
Seem'd with the passing cloud's dark-varied shades
To mingle, as they on the wild winds wav'd ;
The burnish'd spear, which quiver'd in his grasp,
At intervals flash'd like the lightning cloud,
Resting upon a mountain's lofty pine
That far above the forest rears its head ;
His vast enchanted shield, orb circling orb,
Blaz'd like a globe in flames ; on its dread field
A scaly dragon coil'd his monstrous folds,
And from his glowing eyes and horrid jaws
Shot forth pernicious sparkles fraught with death.
Not the fam'd image form'd of Parviam's gold,
On Dura's plain set up to be ador'd
By Babylon's great monarch, beam'd so bright
In the meridian sunshine as the mail
Of this gigantic warrior ; steel of proof,
By magic wrought so splendid, that he seem'd
A swelling pillar of ethereal fire,
From which such vivid fulgence shone around,
As dazzled all th' embattled enfilades,
And o'er the vale a sun-bright glory cast.
Now like the god of war in terrors clad,
And far o'ertopping all the marshall'd lines,

The giant stands, sublimely terrible !
As some volcanic mountain, wrapt in flames,
Its princely brow uplifts above the clouds,
The neighb'ring hills o'erlooking with disdain,
So stood this man of might, casting an eye
Of cruel scorn on all the Hebrew host ;
Whose trembling front, although in armour sheath'd,
Retreated with confusion on their rear,
And, but for shame, the field of fight had fled :
But, could his genius, who beside him stalk'd
With low'ring visage, matchless e'en in hell,
As higher than the Andes' highest peak
He stretch'd his horrid stature, mist-involv'd,
Have been in all his terrors to their sight
Imag'd materially, they had not fled ;
But dropp'd their useless weapons, and expir'd,
To view a form so infinitely dread.

Now with a voice, rough as the foamy wave
When it o'erleaps the rocks, and deeper ton'd
Than is the spirit of the winter storm
Chiding the groaning woods, Goliath cried,
“ Why set you thus your battle in array,
Ye far-fam'd sons of Israel ? Why prolong
A needless war, that may at once be clos'd ?
Am I not a Philistine, in whose veins
The noble blood of Anak's mighty line
Flows proudly and unmingled ? Are not you
Servants to Saul the herdsman ? Choose ye then,

A champion for your nation, if your tribes
Among their ranks a champion now can vaunt,
And let him in the presence of both hosts
In single combat try with me his strength.
If he prevail, then we will be your slaves;
But, if the wreath of conquest crown my brow,
Then shall ye be our bondsmen, and serve us.
Give me a man, that we together may
Right manfully in deeds of warfare strive.
Your armies, by the gods of Askalon
And Gaza, I defy!" Not one replied.
A death-like silence reign'd through all the ranks
Of Saul's war-harness'd thousands, which now seem'd
More frightful than the battle's wildest roar;
While in each other's fear-blanch'd looks they read
Their own dismay. All but the minstrel youth
Seem'd panic-struck; he, with undaunted eye,
And cheek from which pale-hearted trembling fear
The rose of true-born valour could not pluck,
Beheld the warlike port and giant form
Of fell Goliath. So the eagle views
The fire-impregnate storm that bursts beneath
The loftier regions of her skyed flight,
From whence she stoops to hover in the blaze,
And list the music of the deep-mouth'd roar.

At length a warrior thus to David said:—
"Hast thou this champion of Philistia seen,
Who looks, amid the battle's hostile field,

A moving tow'r of adamant and steel
Impregnable? Hast view'd his gleaming spear,
Huge as a weaver's beam, tall as the mast
Of a large bark that ploughs the ocean wave?
Forth is he come, affrighted Israel's host,
As is his daily custom, to defy;
But whoso killeth him, of this be sure,
The king with gifts and honours will enrich,
Give him his daughter, and his father's house
Make free in Israel." To whom David thus:—
"And shall such honours crown the man who dares
This foul idolater to deeds of arms?
Who, nobly breast to breast encount'ring him,
Plucks those vain plumes of triumph from his crest,
Fells his proud tow'ring height, and takes away
The vile reproach from Israel's fear-struck tribes?
Why, what is this o'erbearing man of Gath,
This great Philistine, this uncircumcis'd,
That he the armies of the living God,
Jehovah's sons, should daringly despise?"

To him Eliab, full of ire, now spake:—
"Why com'st thou here, young minion of our sire?
Thy brethren need thee not. The hostile field,
Where human blood in crimson torrents flows,
Ill suits thy simple manners and thy years.
What are to thee the actions of the brave,
Or high achievements, whose green page shall live
In deathless story to the end of time?"

Go home, and tend thy father's fleecy flocks,
Employment fitted to thy childish age:
Return, young boy, nor idly loiter here
To view the noble deeds of men in arms."
Conscious that in his bosom martial fire,
By heav'n new lighted, most resistless blaz'd,
And would his arm untried in battle nerve,
Make sure his aim, and wing the fated dart,
The youth heroic meekly turn'd aside
From the disdainful smile and haughty glance
Eliab on him cast; and, meeting soon
Abner, the noble captain of the host,
Before the king crav'd of him to be brought.
Saul to his tent was now retir'd alone,
And pacing it, absorb'd in gloomy thought
Of what might be the dread and strange result
Of this unequall'd war; while from him broke
His wild soliloquy, half mutter'd thus:—

“ O, who would be a king, to wear a crown,
That sparkling outside show of seeming bliss,
But lin'd with goring thorns, on whose sharp points
Sweet peace and happiness, alas, expire!
O royalty! ambition's pinnacle!
What art thou but a dizzy height, whereon
Who stands must not make nice of any prop,
However vile, or smear'd with human blood,
If he would keep his station; where he stands
The mark of every wreckful storm that blows,

And fears each hour some rival's secret stab.
And what's his recompense? A little pomp!
Like to an image on a mountain's top
He shines, the worshipp'd idol of the herd
That bend before him, as the waving woods
To the brisk gale, while fortune on him smiles;
And like an idol's curs'd, when fell mischance
In all her fury tears his gaudy robe
Of sov'reignty, and shews him to the world
A mortal, wretched as his worshippers!
Will God forsake me quite? will he pluck off
The royal mantle, which his own right hand
In awful splendour buckled on my back,
Amid his thunders dread, on Gilgal's plain;
And leave me bare and naked, to become
A public scorn in the vile heathen's eyes?
O that I ne'er had known the cares of state!
How happy was my former life to this!
A frugal swain, then peaceful were my dreams
Beneath the greenwood's shade at sunny noon,
When nor foul treason, jealousy, nor care,
Frighted sweet sleep from my soft mossy couch.
And must the laurels which this arm hath won
From Moab, Ammon, Edom; from the kings
Of Zebah, and Philistia's proudest chiefs;
All from my brow be torn, trod in the dust
By this accursed son of Anak's race?
Will none of all my warriors so renown'd

Accept the giant's challenge, and destroy
This foul oppressor of his country? No :
Not one appears to save me! Must my sun
Of royal glory set so soon in blood,
Room for some happier rival king to make?
O that I knew him! that I had the art
Of secret witchcraft but to find him out,
That this good sword might drink the rebel's blood,
And free me from these dire corroding pangs
Of jealousy, which tear my tortur'd heart
When I behold a hero's growing fame,
And in his rising merit think I see
A hand that snatches at my falling crown!"

Thus meditated Saul, while by his side
Th' accurs'd Adrammelec stood, dark as night,
And now rejoin'd, though by the king unheard:—
“ In this emprise should great Goliath fail,
But that's scarce possible, so brave the chief,
Yet should he fail, Saul, thou shalt have thy wish :
Ere it be long, I will to thee reveal
The youth decreed by Heav'n thy seat to fill,
And aid thy arm to rid thee of thy fears :—
But, by my hopes of triumph, here he comes,
And, by his looks, flush'd with the hope t' achieve
Of martial fame some glorious enterprise !
My gay illusions have not fail'd to fill
His boyish heart, I find, with vanity,
Which leads him here already to the brink .

Of certain ruin. With ambition's glare
I will his eyes so dazzle, that the gulf
He shall not see, till, with o'erbalanc'd heels
Kicking the edge, he tumbles headlong down.
What form celestial stands beside the youth?
Aid me, O hell, with all thy furies! 'tis
The happy seraph Abdiel! With what love
He eyes the hated boy! he is become,
No doubt, his guardian angel, by command
Of Heav'n, our purposes to overthrow.
I'll hie me to th' assembled pow'rs of air,
Who o'er the armies cloud-encompass'd set
In council, and the issue of this fight
Anxious await."——

Thus saying, forth he rush'd
From out the tent, and rose on wide-stretch'd wing
To his compeers in convocation met.
Scarce had he the pavilion royal left,
Ere the brave gen'ral enter'd, to the king
Leading the blooming minstrel, by whose side
In graceful majesty blest Abdiel stood,
And heav'nly ardour breath'd into his soul.
Before his breast he held the glitt'ring shield
With which he fought when war was crst in heav'n,
Temper'd of stuff to all created force
Impenetrable, and his armour shone
Flame-colour'd. As the pillar of bright fire,
Which sunder'd Egypt's host from Jacob's sons,

Gilded the night-waves that on each side rose
Above the banners of the pilgrim tribes,
So did the seraph with his radiant mail
A golden glory fling o'er all the tent,
Which, like the lightning's flash, on Saul's dark eye,
Half-visible, glar'd dazzling, and expir'd
To mortal sight, that else had been struck blind.

“ Ha! Abner here? (cried Israel's gloomy king)
O! I am fill'd with wild distracting cares
How to preserve my kingdom, keep my crown,
Protect myself, and save the tribes elect
From this fell son of Anak, whose huge arm
Hangs o'er my head, and threatens soon to take
Empire and life! O; that some warlike prince,
Inspir'd by heav'n, as were our chiefs of old,
Would now stand forth with orb'd shield and spear,
And from this monster of the giant brood
His monarch and his grateful nation save!”

To whom returned Abner :—“ Mighty king,
No more let grief thy royal brow becloud ;
Banish thy cares, thy wishes are fulfill'd,
Accepted is the challenge of thy foe.”

“ O God! receive the off'ring of my heart,
A heart with gratitude sincere o'er-fraught ;”
Resum'd th' enraptur'd Saul, as on his brow
Deep melancholy to bright joy gave place ;
“ That thou hast not forsook me yet 'tis plain.—
But where, good Abner, is the warrior brave,

This heav'n-inspired hero of renown ?
Quick bring him to my tent, that my glad eyes
May gaze upon him, that my eager arms
May strain him close to this transported breast,
The gloried saviour of a sinking land."

" Behold him then, redoubted prince of men,
This is the youth," said Abner, " who will dare
To wage encounter with the boast of Gath !
No chief of fame is he, no hero skill'd
In martial enterprises, no proud king
Who nations hath subdued by matchless might,
And, in the annals of renown enroll'd,
Claims high precedence for his warlike deeds ;
But a poor shepherd-boy, who all his days
Hath, in obscurity ignoble liv'd ;
Who never saw th' embattled field before,
Nor siege beheld, nor knows the use of arms."

" This is too much," cried Saul with frowning brow ;
" What means this mock'ry, Gen'ral, thus to raise
Expectancy in my despairing breast,
Then with chill disappointment's iron hand
To stab each new-born joy it there brought forth ?
Canst thou be Abner, captain of my host,
For gravity and wisdom so renown'd,
My counsellor in peace, my shield in war ?"

" Thy wonder, O my royal lord, abate ;
For, had I not discover'd that this youth,
Though humbly born, and train'd to rustic toils,

In merit and in nobleness of mind
Surpasseth all the chiefs that swell thy train,
I would not to thy presence him have brought :
While with a soul of valour's essence form'd,
He pants some glorious enterprise t' achieve,
Yet temper'd with such sweet humility,
As, like the sea when noontide suns burst forth
From those dark clouds that chok'd their early rays,
Reflects the virtues which adorn his mind
With double lustre to a gen'rous eye.
But who doth in our archives brightest shine,
As the defenders of their native land ?
Not heroes fam'd for high exploits of arms,
Nor warriors royal-born, whose blood-dy'd swords
Had desolated half the subject world ;
But worthies, who, inspir'd with heav'n's own zeal
Rose from obscurity's deep-shaded vale,
As from thick darkness springs the beamy morn,
And with their glory our forefathers cheer'd,
Chas'd all the storms of state away, and rul'd
Bright regents in a hemisphere serene ;
Till in the west their sinking lustre set,
To rise in skies for ever clear, and shine
Eternally, with undeclining ray.
Who conquer'd haughty Sisera ? who the kings
Of the oppressing Midians ? —————

“ Spare,” cried Saul,

“ Thy ref'rences to days of yore, good chief.

Our present evils present remedies
Loudly demand."

"Let not pale fear assail
Thy heart, O king," the youth return'd, "because
Of this fell foeman, chief of Arba's line ;
Thy servant to the combat now will dare
This lion of the war, Philistia's boast ;
And, ere yon sun shall, with his farewell beam
The western hills illumine, I'll bring his head—
Doubt not my words, O king—to this thy tent."

"Impossible thou shouldst !" the monarch said,
"Untutor'd as thou art in war's rough school,
To martial discipline a stranger quite ;
'Twould nought avail thee tho' thou hadst the strength
Of Samson, when thou com'st to cope with one
Who from his youth hath been a man of war.
How then canst thou, a stripling, who hast serv'd
No long campaigns, no bloody vict'ries gain'd,
Fought with no vet'ran heroes, nor one palm
Of conquest pluck'd to grace thy youthful brow ;
Whose name was never heard beyond the shades
That skirt thy native cot ; O ! how canst thou,
Good gentle boy, presume to feebly strive .
With one whose warlike deeds and hardihood
Renown's far-sounding clarion hath proclaim'd
From where the sun first gilds the mountain tops
Of Sheba's distant land, e'en to the sea
Of Ashkenaz, that in its amber flood "

Reflects the last faint gleam of dying day,
And those green isles wash'd by Elisha's wave ;
As soon the dove with trembling wing might force
The rav'nous vulture from the corse-strewn field ;
As soon the lambkin from the darkling fold
Might scare the spotted mountain pard, as thou
O'erthrow in fight this giant man of Gath ;
As eas'ly with thy voice so impotent,
Thou on the banks of Egypt's stream may'st stand,
And bid its waves recede within their bounds,
When o'er the land its annual waters roll ;
Or bid yon sun his noontide glory keep,
Nor, at the wonted hour declining, drive
His golden chariot o'er the western hills ;
Or lead us back to Egypt through the sea,
And seat us firmly on the Memphian throne ;
As with thy feeble arm, unus'd to blood,
Attempt to pull this tow'r of Anak down."

" The God I serve, with whom is nothing hard,"
Resum'd the hero, " hath by instruments
Humble as is thy servant e'en perform'd
What thou hast nam'd, though it to thee now seems
Impossible. But Egypt and the sea
Can testify his wondrous miracles.
Nor be the hill of Gibeon silent, where
Thy golden chariot rested, O thou sun !
From noon to dewy eve, had eve been there ;
But she affrighted fled, and with the moon

Stay'd musing in the vale of Ajalon.
But—more, O king, thee confidence to give—
Know that thy servant kept his father's sheep,
When by the ev'ning star came to the fold
A lion and a bear, and took a lamb,
Which they with growlings fierce to pieces tore,
And in my sight devour'd. With pity touch'd,
I felt a new-born courage fire my soul;
The brindled lion by the throat I seiz'd,
And with a stone dash'd out the monster's brains,
Who, as he lay with agony convuls'd,
Tore madly up the earth, and, rolling wild
His glaring eye, in blood and dust expir'd.
Nor did the shaggy bear by flight escape;
I caught and slew him too, and homeward bore
The spoils my valour won:—and thy huge foe
Shall by me fall, as those wild monsters fell.
Sure thou canst doubt no longer, prince of men!
He who preserv'd me from the lion's paw,
And the grim bear's fell fangs, my shield will be,
And in the direful struggle give me strength
To conquer this proud son of Arba's blood."

"Go, valiant youth, with thee is God himself!
Thou shalt return a conq'ror to my tent,
And from my hands receive thy bright reward;
With noble Abner to my armoury haste,
And be in war's habiliments equipt.
A plumed helm of brass, O martial chief,

Set on his head ; and that bright brigandine
Of burnish'd steel we won from Ekron's lord,
Around him clasp ; and the well-temper'd brand
With which I fought and vanquish'd Agag, gird
Upon his thigh. Then, by my herald, send
The youth's defiance to this mighty foe.

The God of war be with thee, brave my son !”

Now Abner to the armoury David led,
And harness'd him in all the proud attire
Of iron war. “ Ah, noble Abner,” cried
The youthful Mars, “ this splendid brigandine,
This helm of brass, these gauntlets, and this sword,
Suit not my limbs, unus'd to warlike gear.
The God of Israel be my sword and shield !”
Thus saying, down he threw the rattling mail
That with its cumbrous weight his limbs oppress'd,
And with his staff and scrip went forth to meet,
Brave as the Decii, his fierce giant foe.

The martial clarion of each champion bold
With deaf'ning clang the mountain echoes woke.
But who can tell th' amazement of the hosts,
When they beheld the shepherd-boy advance
With nor bright armature, nor shield, nor glave
A cloud of sad discomfort darken'd all
The faces of the tribes of Israel, which
The beams of joy so late had lighted up
With hope of vict'ry o'er their enemies,
When first they heard their herald sound his trump,

And their incipient shouts to murmurs turn'd ;
While joy sat laughing in Philistine eyes,
To see an unarm'd rustic youth oppos'd
Against their brazen tow'r of boasted strength.
Nor less had joy'd the princes of the air,
Who from their cloud-encav'd convention rose
To mingle with the armies, had they not
Beheld the seraph Abdiel by his side,
With many a wing'd brigade of heav'nly guards,
Bright gleaming up and down the gloomy ranks
Of the desponding-visag'd Israelites ;
Like beauteous moon-beams, that at intervals
Break from between the storm-rent clouds of night ;
While on each wing were fiery chariots rang'd
With flaming steeds, and swords of waving fire,
Armipotent and bright as compassed
The hill of Dathan, when the Syrians sought,
With all their host, to take Elisha thence ;
Which fill'd the fiends with doubt and dark surmise,
Though his tremendous buckler Moloc held
Before the champion of Phenicia's host,
And fiercer seem'd than when he fought in heav'n.

But David, reckless of applause or scorn,
Relying on his God, pass'd firmly on,
Inspir'd with nobler heroism far
Than fir'd th' Albanian brothers, sons of fame,
Who with their country's freedom nobly fell ;
Or the Horatii ; him surpassing far

In everlasting honour and renown,
Who stood alone, yet sav'd himself and Rome.
Now, at the brook that sunder'd Elah's glen,
The youthful shepherd chose him five smooth stones,
Which, as he put into his leathern srip,
The guardian spirit touch'd, and with a pow'r^h
Resistless as th' oak-cleaving thunderbolt
Impregnated, which in them dormant lay,
Till active impulse woke their energy;
Then no created strength, however charm'd
By witchcraft's science, could their force repel.

The giant now approach'd th' intrepid youth,
And, looking from behind his flaming shield,
Thus with a voice of distant thunder spoke :—
“ Why comes not on this champion of our foe ?
Is not his harness girded on his back ?
Or does pale fear his ling'ring steps detain ?
From what far-distant country is he come ?
For surely 'tis not one of Israel's tribes,
(The trembling dastards !) has the hardiment
To claim the glory by this arm to fall ?
Why did the herald not proclaim his name ?
And with it blazon forth his mighty deeds,
His proud exploits, and noted chivalry ?
Yon hills should echo back a thousand names
Of high-born warriors, and of sceptred chiefs,
That his bold arm hath conquer'd ; and the realms
His desolating sword hath ruin'd left

Behind the wheels of his war-chariot, drawn
By vict'ry's steeds, with hoofs deep-dy'd in blood,
From golden Ophir to the western shores
Of Hellespont, and Caspian's land-lock'd wave.
Whoe'er he be, I would, by Dagon's shrine,
He were the conq'ror of the universe,
That my right arm, in this his last assay,
Might from his laden brows the garland pluck,
With all the trophies of his vict'ries deck'd,
To set upon my own." To whom the youth:—

“ No conq'ror of the universe is he,
Who now comes forth to champion thee to fight;
No vict'ries boasts he won right bloodily—
Vict'ries that devastate and fright the world,
Leaving behind them carnage, flames, and wreck—
Yet is he one of those thy haughty pride
And arrogance vain-glorious hath defied:
And, though no splendid crowns nor laurel wreaths
His brows adorn, yet will he, through his God,
Whom thou hast scorn'd, by bravely conq'ring thee
And saving Jacob's race, such glory win
As shall his name for ever consecrate;
And gather from thy fall immortal palms,
Which, planted by the hand of sacred fame
In holy ground, shall flourish o'er his tomb,
Till sun, and moon, and worn-out time, expire.”

“ Why, who art thou, that in this rustic gear,”
Respoke the giant, “ dar'st to breathe such lies?”

“ I am my nation’s champion, and thy foe,”
Said David, “ by my God and king sent here
To lay thy lofty stature in the dust.
Ere yon bright sun declines, proud warrior, thou
Shalt on the red turf roll thy mail in blood,
And, like an ax-fell’d cedar hewn and lopt,
There headless lie, nor lift again thy spear
Amid the battle-swell.”—“ Ha ! what, a boy !
An insect, sent to cope with me in arms !
Keep thou at distance, lest my finger’s weight
Should on thee fall, and crush thee like a moth.
Could not thy God and king through all their realms
Some fitter champion than a shepherd find
To fight their battles ? Hence, thou untaught boy—
Thou idiot in the noble arts of war—
Back to thy sheepcots and thy rustic toil !
’Twere pity that fair ruddy face of thine
Should by foul blood and scars disfigur’d be.
The warbling lute, or harp’s soft strings, become
Those white and well-form’d fingers better far
Than the rough warrior’s spear. Return, vain youth,
And tell thy king that sent thee, Anak’s son,
Who drove before his single arm whole clouds,
At Ebenezer, of your dastard race ;
Slew Hophni and Phineās, Eli’s sons,
And captive took, spite of your vaunted God,
His mystic ark, your boasted sure defence,
Will not descend his burnish’d arms to stain

With thy ignoble blood. Didst think, weak boy,
I was a yelping cur, come forth to bay
At yon reflected image of the sun,
Which sparkles in the rippling brook so bright,
That with thy shepherd's staff and sling, thou com'st
To meet me? May the maledictions foul
Of Dagon, and the queen of heav'n, alight
On thy devoted head! and of thy cheek
The beauty, so effeminately rare,
Taint with the dye of Ethiop!" David thus:—

“When I return, thou base idolater,
It shall be with thy gore-stain'd head and mail,
Which I will at my sov'reign's footstool lay,
The trophies of my conquest bravely won.
I do not fear the vengeance of thy god,
Who could not save his worshippers nor fane
From the o'erwhelming might of Samson, nor
Himself from falling, maim'd and limb-lopt, down
Before the ark of high Omnipotence!
Which gladly did Philistia's humbled lords
With sacred gifts right solemnly return.”

“Ha! dost thou threaten me, vile foreskinn'd imp!
Advance, and I will piecemeal rend thee, slave!
The valley with thy reeking blood imbrue,
And on my spear those limbs dissever'd toss,
To cram the kite and corse-devouring wolves,
That rove at midnight o'er th' ensanguin'd field
To fatten on the slain; nor shall the hosts

Of yon faint-hearted Israel 'scape my arm ;
I'll drag them bound in chains to Askalon,
To Gath, and Gaza ; and whole hecatombs
Of those accurs'd, whose veins boast Abr'ham's blood,
At Moloc's altar immolate, to please
The gods divine of earth, and sea, and air." ^k

Then answer'd David, with unalter'd look,
" To me thou com'st in all the blaze of arms,
And silv'ry-gleaming equipage of war ;
But I with neither shield, nor spear, nor glave,
To thee advance in the dread name of Him
Whose armies impiously thou hast defied.
This day will the eternal Lord of hosts
Give thee into my hand, and thou shalt sink
Beneath this arm victorious to the ground,
Spite of thy giant strength and burnish'd mail.
Thy headless trunk I'll give the midnight wolf,
As by the wand'ring moon he scents his prey ;
And, tombless, long thy sun-bleach'd bones shall shine
A lasting witness of my victory.
This valley with Philistine carcasses
I also will o'erspread, a banquet meet
For vultures, and the eagle of the rocks ;
That all who are assembled here may know
There is a God in Israel, who can save
Without or sword or spear ; and who, amid
The battle's fury, walks upon the wings
Of plumed Vict'ry, and to Israel's host
Will give this day her brightest wreaths of fame."

Now rag'd with tenfold fierceness and despite
The giant, by a boy to be outbrav'd,
And for the dreadful conflict both prepare;
But ne'er was seen a more unequal match.
Nor did Alcides in the Nemean vale
Such noble bravery of soul display,
When the grim lion, by the pow'rful arm
Of that fam'd hero, with dire howlings, fell,
As Jesse's son before the gazing hosts;
Nor when he from the gates of hell brought up,
As visionary tales of poets tell,
Three-headed Cerb'rus. Nor Bellerophon,
Who was in age and beauty similar
(If sacred with profane may be compar'd)
To blooming David, felt such noble fire
When he the Lycian monster overcame.
Now on each side the vale stood, mute as night,
Impatient expectation. Not a sound
Through all th' accoutred ranks struck on the ear:
For busy preparation quite forbore
Her noisy work, to gaze upon the fight.
The armourers their clinking hammers flung
From their loose hands, the combatants to view.
Nor longer sounded through the camps the clang
Of brazen harness, and harsh-closing mail.
Chariot by chariot motionless was fixt,
And charioteers, in mute attention, dropp'd,
Listless, the reins upon their chargers' backs.
While e'en the very mettled steed forgot

His boastful neighings, standing still to gaze.
The farthest soldiers might have heard the stream,
As through the glen with fear it headlong ran,
Giving a farewell kiss to ev'ry stone
That would its weary pilgrimage retard ;
Save when the giant with his pond'rous spear
Struck on his ringing shield a war-note dread,
That echo'd like a sullen death-bell's toll
From hill to hill, and seem'd pale Israel's knell.

To meet his foeman David forward ran,
And with his sling well-aim'd, and arm enforc'd
By angel energy, a stone he hurl'd,
(Ta'en from his srip) whose latent fire, awoke
Instinctively by motion's wondrous pow'r,
And self-impell'd, sunk like an iron ball,
Shot from a culv'rin of vast caliber,
Into the forehead of Philistia's pride,
Where warm it lay amid the spatter'd brains,
Maugre grim Moloc's adamantine shield
Before him held, maugre his magic casque,
His flaming arms, and all enchantment's spells !
Prone on the crimson'd ground, cursing his gods,
His guardian genius, and the agency
Of witchcraft false, with bellowings dire he fell,
While o'er the field his thund'ring harness rang,
And, rolling in a sea of blood, expir'd !

So from the rattling cloud low-pois'd in air,
The dark volcano of electric fire,

Descends the blue-wing'd candent thunderbolt,
And, rob'd in blaze terrific, scaths the oak
That stood a king amid the forest shades :
With flame-sing'd foliage, shiver'd trunk and limbs,
It sinks a hideous wreck ; and in its fall,
As to the passing storm it loudly groans,
Crushes the wretch who from the tempest sought
A fatal shelter in its wide-spread arms,
While through the woods resounds the echoing crash.
But O what murmurs, shrieks, and moans, now burst
From all the harness'd heathen as they saw
Their chief destroy'd, and with him all their hopes
Of glory and of conquest ! Like the sea,
Woke from its slumbers on its rocky bed
At nightfall, by the visitation wild
Of boist'rous tempests, so awoke the din
Of strange confusion through their trembling ranks,
As each, now only anxious for himself,
Careless of chiefs or orders, sought t' escape.
With rage unbounded storm'd the furious fiends,
Who with their blazing arms hemm'd David round,
And his protector, threat'ning dreadful war ;
That had with dire disorder torn the globe,
And through the Zodiac ruinous alarm
From Aries spread, e'en to the golden Fish,
But that innumerable spirits blest
Came to their aid, and drove th' infernal crew
From Elah's vale, unequal to contend

With such superior force. Their horrid yells
Rifted the skies, and were, as ancient Fame
Doth truly in her chronicles report,
Heard from the farthest Ind, e'en to the shores
Of Chersonesus, and the Ambron's vales.'

“ He's fall'n ! he's fall'n ! our foeman is no more ! ”
Through Israel's host resounds ; while war-shouts burst,
And songs of triumph ring the welkin round,
Loud as the groaning of the storm-bow'd woods,
Blent with the thunder's voice and ocean's roar,
Making old Ephes-dammim's seated hills
To their foundations tremble. Now forth draws
The victor youth the dread gigantic brand
Of Anak's fallen son ; the burnish'd steel,
Pond'rous and bright, gleams in the war-band's eyes,
As from the trunk he lops the giant's head,
More frightful than the vivid lightning's flash.
Stript of his casque, adorn'd with eagle plumes
And gorgeous mail, hell-deem'd invulnerable,
On the red turf that drinks his flowing blood
Lies stretch'd, a banquet huge for kites and wolves,
The colossëan thunderbolt of war !
While the young conq'ror, laden with those spoils
His valour won right bravely, grasping now
The raven locks of the slain giant's head,
In triumph bears his trophies to the king,
Cheer'd by the loud acclaim of Israel's host.

Their tow'r dismantled, and their glory set

In clouds of black disgrace, no more to rise,
The army of Philistia fled amain ;
Nor did the warriors of the chosen tribes
Gaze with unactive arm upon their flight ;
In haste they snatch'd their weapons, and pursu'd
The dastard fugitives. On ev'ry side
Horses and horsemen, shields, steel bows, and spears,
Chariots and charioteers together fall'n,
Bright coats of mail, and garments roll'd in blood,
With all the cumbrous luggage of the war,
Strew'd the wide plains from Elah's tented dale
To the proud tow'rs of Gath and Askalon ;
While rout, confusion, carnage, blood, and death,
With mad disorder rag'd ; and shrieks, and cries,
And groans, and curses, clashing swords and shields,
Repeated shouts of triumph, and the rush
Of charging parties scatter'd here and there,
With all the din of vict'ry and defeat,
Of panting flight and hot pursuit yblent,
In dismal discord through the vault of heav'n
Re-echo'd to Philistia's farthest shores.
But joy beam'd bright in ev'ry Hebrew eye,
And songs of gladness rose through Israel's land,
Praising their God, who by such wondrous means
Had wrought salvation for them, as of old.

So oft the midnight tempest walks abroad,
Muffled in pall of deepest Stygian woof;
Wild devastation marks the path it treads,

While tumbling turrets, rocks, and mountain pines,
Before it bow their heads, and fall to earth.
The rumbling thunders gender in its womb,
And send their bright forerunners round the skies
To sing the raven locks of frightened Night,
And lift the cloke of darkness up, to show,
By fitful glimpses, to the trembling world
The wreckful terrors of the howling storm,
That madly mingles ocean with the clouds,
And scares the savage wand'ers of the gloom
Back to the shelter of their delved caves :
But soon looks rosy forth the smiling morn,
And with her radiant finger calms the roar,
And lays the piping winds and waves asleep.
Then Nature, sooth'd, assumes her wonted charms,
And, like an infant still'd, laughs through her tears,
That glitt'ring hang on every bloomy spray.
The birds their woodland minstrelsy renew
In chorus universal, while the sun
Gilds with refulgence sweet the azure vault,
And paints the landscape with a thousand flow'rs.

THE ROYAL MINSTREL.

BOOK IV.

THE ARGUMENT.

Jonathan and David vow eternal friendship—Saul returns triumphant from the field of battle—the virgins meet him with songs and dances—their praise of David displeases him—the princess Michal is delighted to find in the defender of her country the minstrel whom she had long loved—Saul resolves to send David to wage fresh wars, that he may fall by the Philistines—David overhears Michal confess her love for him in her favourite bower—Saul invites his chieftains to a grand banquet—a bard introduces on the harp the episode of Deborah and Barak—Adrammelec enters the hall, and takes possession of the mind of Saul—Michal solicits David to play on the harp—he introduces the episode of Jephthah's rash vow—the king grows frantic, and declares his crown and life in danger—a dreadful storm rushes through the palace—Endor witches and spirits enter, bow to David, and hail him king—Saul casts his javelin at him, but protected by Abdiel, his guardian angel, he escapes from the presence unhurt.

THE ROYAL MINSTREL.

BOOK IV.

AWHILE, O Muse, no more of iron wars,
Nor groans, nor gush of blood, nor clashing steel,
Sound from thy strings ; but raise the cheerful song
Of vict'ry, friendship, joy, and tender love !

Won by the hardiment, the shape and air
Of lovely David, in whose actions shone
A grace and magnanimity divine,
Conspicuous through his shepherd's rustic gear,
'As star-beams through the misty robe of Night,
The princely Jonathan felt all the glow
Of sacred friendship fill his noble heart
For so much worth obscur'd, as at the feet
Of royal Saul the brave deliv'rer laid
The bloody trophies of his conqu'ring arm.
On to his tent he led th' illustrious youth,
And with the richest suit his arm'ry held

His well-proportion'd form clad lovingly ;
From his own back the ermin'd robe took off,
And on the shoulders of young David laid
The splendid symbol of imperial pow'r ;
Gave him his bow, his girdle, and the sword
With which he fought at Bozez' guarded rock.
'Twas now with a regard reciprocal
The youthful heroes met in friendship's vows,
And swore that time nor distance, grief nor joy,
Envy of conquest, nor foul jealousies
Of state and regal title, e'er should part
The chords indissoluble of their love.
Not fabled Nisus, and his warlike mate,
In friendship with these noble youths could vie ;
Nor felt that Theban pair, of old renown,
Esteem so pure, affection so refin'd.

Meanwhile, with conquest flush'd, the Hebrew host,
Returning from pursuit, their foemen's camp
They rifle of its treasures, and prepare
To follow their triumphant monarch home.
High in a car of regal state appear'd
The warlike Saul, in mail refulgent sheath'd,
Far-gleaming o'er the sea of waving plumes,
Banners and shields, spears, swords, and gonfalons,
Wet with Phenician blood, that round him mov'd
In solemn march to vict'ry's cheering strains ;
Like the fair moon o'er ocean's surgy waste
Forth walking in the fulness of her light.

In trappings gay of gold caparison'd,
Six milkwhite steeds his sparkling chariot drew,
Dighted with many a wreath and garland green,
His great achievements speaking, and emblaz'd
With arms and splendid trophies. By him sat
The prince, and David like a youthful Mars;
In all the pride of dress, his beauty shone
With added grace, and tenfold majesty.
More lovely look'd he than Leander, when
The moonlight Hellespont he 'cross'd to meet
The peerless princess of fam'd Sestos' tow'rs.
Before them proudly rode the dark-brow'd grooms,
Bearing the giant's armour, and his head,
Whose ghastly visage seem'd in death to frown
Revenge for ev'ry crimson drop that fell,
Staining his harness, from its sword-hack'd veins.
To meet the sons of glory and renown,
As from the corse-strew'd fields of fight they came,
A thousand virgins of each city flock'd
From farthest Dan e'en to Beersheba's wilds;
Who chaplets strew'd of sweetest redolence
Before the warriors as they pass'd along,
And crowns of laurel, myrtle, and of palm,
Set on their heads; while to inspiring sounds
Of cymbal, tabor, harp, and merry pipe,
Their nimble feet in mazy circles danc'd.
Now such a chorus loud of voices stole
Between each pause of dulcet instruments,

Then mingling with the roar of warlike notes,
Sublimely sweet, fill'd the wide azure vault,
As captive took th' enraptur'd soul, and seem'd
To lift it to the heav'n of heav'ns what time
The choirs seraphic tune their golden lyres;
While thus the song of vict'ry wildly rose :—

“ Strike, strike to Israel's God the note of praise !
A thousand bullocks on his altars blaze !

He our warriors did inspire ;
His spirit fill'd them with heroic fire,
The chosen race to save !

Let the loud trump, the warbling flute,
The trembling lyre, the mellow lute,
With notes of softest harmony,
Mingle with war's rough minstrelsy,
And swell the chorus that applauds the brave !
Thousands, O Saul, have fall'n beneath thy brand,
But tens of thousands fell by David's hand !

Brave warriors, hail !
Your nation's glory !
Fame sings your deeds
In deathless story !
Goliath's fall'n, in dust he sleeps,
Dagon o'erthrown, Philistia weeps !
Shout, Israel, shout,
Glad triumphs sing !

See, thy foes with bloody rout,
Vanquish'd fly the tented field !
With songs of vict'ry let the welkin ring,
And conquest's palm to youthful David yield.
Thousands, O Saul, have fall'n beneath thy brand,
But tens of thousands fell by David's hand !”

Now wildly sparkled with the fire of rage
The dark fell eye of Saul, as from his car
He stepp'd, and at the palace entrance met
Th' embraces of his daughters. They, aside
Casting the distaff and the loom, had flown,
Follow'd by all their train of damsels fair,
With dance and song their sire's return to hail ;
Smiling to see his temples bound with wreaths,
Like the sweet hours that wake the morn of May
To revel with the sun in Sharon's vale.
But ah ! the king with care-beclouded brow,
In gloomy contemplation wrapt, nor marks
The bloom of joy that mantles o'er their cheeks,
Surpassing bright Aurora's earliest blush ;
Nor hears the gratulations from their lips,
Soft falling as the dew on Hermon's hill,
Greeting his pomp triumphant from the field
Of war and danger, with bright vict'ry crown'd.
Envy malign, and gnawing jealousy
Of this new hero's merit, who appear'd
The shouting people's idol; fill'd his soul

With gloomy apprehensions for his crown ;
And wearied with th' acclaim, the dance, and song,
Of the enraptur'd multitude, who seem'd
But to behold young David's rising fame,
Sole he retir'd, sullen and dark as night.
O, how unlike his sire, the princely son,
Pride of the army, noble Jonathan !
The ecstasy of pleasure his blue eye
Illum'd with rays of glory, like the light
Of the young sunbeams o'er a summer's sky ;
And his full heart seraphic bliss o'erflow'd,
Which none can know but those whose bosoms throb
With sacred friendship's heav'n-like sympathies
That man to angel turn, as he beheld
The happy sons of Israel throng around
His peerless friend, to gaze upon his face ;
Admire his kingly mien and godlike form ;
As to their stringed instruments they sung
His deathless deeds in fight, and shook the skies
With oft-repeated shouts that spoke his fame
To be the heir of immortality.
Well earn'd he deem'd the tributary strains,
Well merited by one so brave in arms,
Yet young as brave, and amiable as young.

O ! for that muse of fire that struck the harp
Of Nature's sweetest bard, amid the groves
And waving reeds of Avon's silver stream,
Which to its echo'd warblings as it flow'd

Still murmur'd hoarse applause ! that I might paint
The soft emotions of that lovely maid,
The beauteous Michal, when the royal prince
Led to the train of nymphs the martial youth,
And cried, " This is the brave deliv'rer, this the son
Of conquest, who subdu'd our giant foe !"
Forward the lovely princess press'd to speak ;
But, when she in the noble hero saw
The blooming minstrel, whose bright image love
Had in her bosom stamp'd indelible,
Her stifled words died on her trembling lips,
Like gentle breezes on the op'ning rose.
Her hand, that with the lily of the vale
Might vie for whiteness, she to David gave ;
At which fresh plaudits through the halls were heard
Of Saul's resplendent palace, and e'en reach'd
The musing king, who, starting from his seat,
Thus to himself, dark-frowning, mutter'd loud :—

“ Again the burst of popular acclaim
Thunders through all the palace ! Will the fools
Set up this David for a god, and pay
Honours divine to the aspiring youth ?
I seem to pass neglected through the crowd,
As though, my martial deeds and high exploits
Being all forgot, this upstart wore my crown ;
As though my reign already was expir'd,
And Jesse's son the regal seat possess'd.
To me the virgins in their songs ascribe

But thousands, while to David they assign
A tenfold conquest.—Curses on his fame!
Soon will they say the kingdom is his due.
'Tis true he hath a great salvation wrought
For Israel, and, though brave beyond compare,
Seems modest as humility itself.
That's the device of those who would be great;
'Tis art, 'tis cunning, 'tis ambition's garb,
With modesty's mock jewels richly deck'd;
By him now worn to set his merit off,
And catch the gaze of popularity.
I hate his presence—hate his very name:
But how of such a rival to be rid
I cannot tell. What if I were to send
The youth unhonour'd back to his old sire,
And let him pine in dull obscurity,
Till all the lustre of his merit fades
In the bright glory of some new exploit,
By me or my brave hardy sons achiev'd?
I fear my warriors, who adore him too,
My palace would demolish, root my name
Out of my father's house, and instantly
Set David, their lov'd idol, on the throne.
Shall I dispatch him privately? How then?
Could it be long conceal'd? No! for the hand
Of Heav'n, whose instrument he seems ordain'd,
Would quickly drag his murderer to light;
And then farewell to empire, crown, and life!

He must not fall by me. But I have sworn
He shall espouse my daughter—be it so—
I'll play the hypocrite—I'll wear a face
Of fatherly affection to the youth,
And all the minions of my servile court
Shall whisper in his ear what love I bear
The chieftain who has sav'd his native land,
And that I seek no dowry for my child,
'Although a princess, but a large revenge .
On the Philistines. Well I know the youth
Burns with the ardour of a vet'ran chief
To signalize himself against the foe ;
And, when love, honour, fame, and patriot zeal,
Conspire to prompt the hero with the thoughts
Of gallant daring, danger he'll defy,
And rush on sure destruction. Thus he falls.
Transporting hope ! while I, unstain'd with blood,
Sit firmly on my throne, and laugh to see
Those I most dread fall by each other's swords.
I'll hence and meet my captains in the hall,
There with a face of smiles my foe embrace ;
While the deluded fool, vain of the pomp
And martial splendour that on him attend,
Shall hug destruction, nor perceive her knife,
Till in his heart he feels its fatal point."
Thus saying, to the hall of shields he hied,
Where David and his warlike household stood
In grand parade, awaiting his command.

'Twas past the noontide hour, and fervid heat
Oppress'd the drooping flow'rs, when, with a heart
Yielding to hope and fear's alternate rule,
Enter'd the royal gardens of the king
Michal, the fairest of his daughters fair,
And to a bow'r of jessamine and nard
Repair'd, alone to vent her tender plaint:—

“What strange alarms my throbbing breast pervade!
Ah, little did I think this warrior brave,
When first the fame of his achievements reach'd
My wond'ring ear, was the sweet minstrel who
My father's melancholy spirit cheer'd
Oft as the fiend possess'd him. Gracious Heav'n,
How wondrous are thy ways! What transports fill'd
My soul amaz'd, when my lov'd brother first
Presented him, the conq'ror of the proud,
And styl'd him the deliv'rer of his land,
The victor of the mighty, who were deem'd
Amid the battle-field invincible.
Love, that had stole into my yielding heart
For the poor minstrel, then with tenfold flame
Blaz'd forth anew to see the hero shine
In all the proud apparel of the war,
A demi-god, amid the armed ranks
And princely chiefs; to hear sweet vict'ry's songs
Proclaim the tens of thousands that had fall'n
Beneath his blood-stain'd falchion, while the shouts
Of an admiring nation rent the air.

But now I tremble with a thousand fears,
Lest, when he claims his merited reward,
The daughter of a king to be his bride,
He might prefer my sister, or my sire
Should force him to receive her for his spouse.
She lov'd him not, nor listen'd to his songs,
When with a skill divine he touch'd the harp ;
Nor does she now, though in his angel face
A more than mortal lustre seems to shine,
Repay his valour with a tender look,
Nor greet his beauty with a melting sigh.
O, this suspense is dreadful! Pitying heav'n,
Should he my sister choose, O let me die
Before I see her made my minstrel's bride."

" Who talks of dying with a voice more sweet
Than is the lonely nightingale's sad song,
When to the moon she tells a mournful tale
Of the vile robbery of her callow young?"
Said David, as he enter'd now the bow'r,
And, kneeling to the princess, kiss'd her hand
With all a favour'd lover's speechless warmth.

" What means, O warrior, this intrusion bold?"
Return'd the royal maid, as she withdrew
Her snow-white hand, while o'er her crimson cheek
The blushes of the early dawn were spread;
" Sure it but ill becomes the hero's part
To lurk conceal'd amid the greenwood shade,
With mean intent to hear a virgin's sighs."

“ Most lovely princess, let thy servant speak,”
Cried David, as he lowly bow’d to earth :
“ I did not lie in wait, but wander’d near
This happy bow’r by chance, and heard a voice
Complaining to the shades. But O, what joy
Thrill’d through my inmost soul when first I heard
Thy voice in music own me for thy love !”

“ Nay, spare me now,” resum’d the beauteous maid :
“ Some other time—and yet why should I blush
To speak the sacred truth ? O, warrior lov’d,
I’ll hide my blushes in thy faithful arms,
And whisper to thy heart my ardent flame.
Hence, cold reserve, for I am all thy own,
So thou my true love’s passion wilt return
With honour : then demand me of my sire !
Think me not lightly won, by being won
So quickly ; thou didst take me by surprise.
But trust me, warrior, I did love thee long
Ere thou didst arm in glitt’ring mail thy limbs ;
Ere in the field thy budding merit op’d
Its new-blown blossoms to bright honour’s sun.”

“ And I,” exclaim’d th’ enraptur’d youth, as now
He press’d the royal virgin to his heart,
“ In the dull shades of lone obscurity
Liv’d on the image of thy peerless charms,
The solace of my solitude, the joy
Of all my waking hours, of all my dreams.
But then it was love’s frenzy, since my fate

So far beneath the maid whom I ador'd
Had cast me, that it seem'd presumptuous madness
To lift my thoughts and wishes to the height
Where now supreme in bliss unhop'd I stand."

Michal replied, " My transports equal thine
To know thou lov'st me, and to see true worth
Through all opposers reach its rightful seat
Of envied greatness. Yet methinks a cloud
Of doubtful fear o'ercasts my morn of joy,
Lest my stern sire should blight our bud of love,
And pass me by, to give to these dear arms
My happier sister." " That shall never be,"
Cried David : " thou my first, my only, love,
By no stern parent from me shalt be torn.
But let not grief ideal mingle now
With our bright certainty of waking bliss.
How sweet the setting sun illumines yon grove,
Like the soft radiance of thy heav'nly eye
When by a tear of half its lustre robb'd.
And now a thousand warblers hymn adieu
To the lov'd god of day ; while in yond bow'r
The turtle renders, O my princess fair,
But half the melody of thy sweet voice ;
The painted lawns and sweetly-blowing groves
Their flow'r-enamell'd robes spread to the dews
That from yon amber clouds distil so soft :
The voice of Nature in wild minstrelsy
Records the attestation of our vows,

And shews a presage of our future joys,
By seeming to partake of what we feel.
To-night thy father holds a solemn feast,
Where he expects our presence.—Come, belov'd,
Through his gay halls, hung with a thousand shields,
The voice of high festivity and mirth,
With music's fascination, shall resound.
To-night we to our God will raise the song
Of victory and triumph bravely won;
And to our warriors, o'er the sparkling bowl,
Rehearse, on the loud harp's melodious strings,
The wonders of his providence of old,
And the recorded actions of our sires."

They quitted now the bow'r, and onward mov'd
To meet the king, high seated at the board
Amid his martial captains of renown;
More lovely seem'd this pair, as on they pass'd,
Than Paris and fair Helen, when they fled
With guilty step to Troy, for which her tow'rs
And palaces in flame-capt ruins sunk.

Now Hesperus, the lover's fav'rite star,
By whose mild ray the shepherd folds his flock,
Shone through the mantle of departed Sol,
Whose fleecy purple, fring'd with glowing gold,
The envious winds had scatter'd o'er the sky,
When, clad in his imperial robes, the king
Enter'd the grand saloon of state antique,
And sat amid the princes on his throne.

A martial feast, in high luxurious pomp,
With rich profusion heap'd the regal board ;
A glitt'ring crowd of chiefs in gorgeous state
The presence throng, and press the banquet round.
On Saul's right hand the royal princes sat,
Brave Jonathan and David in the midst ;
And opposite the daughters of the king,
With all the courtly damsels of their train.
Now feasting, mirth, and revelry abound,
While music breathes such soul-dissolving airs,
And all the varied passions of the mind
Expresses with so strange a magic skill,
That fancy might conceive the gods above
Were all assembled at the Muses' bow'r
What time the sisters struck their rival lyres.
From golden urns a thousand smoking gums,
With amber, myrrh and cassia, nard and balm,
Flung the blest odours of Arabia's gales
Through all the warlike hall ; around its walls
Innum'rous splendid suits of mail were hung,
Helmets and shields of gold, and gleaming brands
With hilts of precious stones, sceptres and crowns,
Bucklers of kings, and spears of mighty chiefs,
O'er which droop'd varied plumes and banners dark,
That seem'd to mourn their long captivity.
With these were intermixt sweet garlands green,
And flow'rs whose bloom outblush'd the mantling wine
That sparkled in the warriors' golden cups.

And now in mirth they claim the pleasing song
Of other times, and deeds of years long past.

O'er their wild harps the aged minstrels hung,
As to departed heroes' ancient fame
They sung the elegy sublime, while thus
Mild Korah warbled to the well-tun'd chords :—

“ Strike to the spirit of great Deborah fam'd,
Who rose a mother in Jehovah's land !
Who prompted Barak brave, Abinoam's son,
To the green banks of Kishon's limpid stream.
There the proud Sisera, captain of the host
Of Jaban, king of Hazor's lofty tow'rs,
His mighty army gather'd, rank on rank
In martial muster stood prepar'd for fight,
And on each wing nine hundred chariots roll'd,
The iron thunder of impending fate.

Yet undismay'd the noble Barak rose,
And with him Ephraim's virgin warrior went ;
They led ten thousand men of Zebulun
And Naphtali, with Issachar's brave hosts,
From Tabor's hill to Kishon's ancient stream.
Then was the roar of war. What bard can sing,
In worthy strains, the horrors of the fray ;
What noise of archers, and what darkling flight
Of feather'd arrows hurtled in the air ?
Loud roar'd the burning wheels of chariots fierce,
And rushing horsemen charging breast to breast ;
Each prince of Israel seem'd himself a host !

And, where the madd'ning battle hottest rag'd,
And peal of trumpets drown'd the groan of death,
Was seen brave Deborah lifting high her spear,
Tipt with the Gentiles' blood, and spurring on
To deeds of glory Israel's deathless chief.
He, tow'ring in his arms, shone like a god,
Where flow'd knee-deep the crimson tide of blood,
Where steeds and chariots o'er each other roll'd,
And foemen, in the rough embrace of war
Encount'ring, fell together pile on pile.
Mounting the slain he shook his deathful lance,
Striking dismay through all proud Sisera's ranks,
And threaten'd singly to destroy the foe.
Angels of death sat on our warriors' swords,
Earth trembled at the dreadful shock of arms,
And heav'n in storms the battle's roar outroar'd;
While ev'ry star malign 'gainst Sisera fought,
And all his host and chariots overthrew;
Not one escap'd to tell the direful news.
O Kishon, on thy flow'ry banks they fell;
Thy stream was swell'n with blood; it overflow'd
With crimson torrents gushing from our foes.
The raven, gorging by thy verdant side,
Stood till their carcasses were wash'd away.

“ Then Sisera fled; his chariot overwhelm'd,
He fled on wings of terror, nor look'd back
Until he reach'd fair Jael's peaceful tent.
Faint and exhausted on the ground he sunk,

And water crav'd, his raging thirst t' allay.
Blest above women, she nectarious draughts
Of milk presented him, and in a dish
Of fine-wrought gold butter and honey gave.
Then o'er the weary warrior, as he slept
Sooth'd by illusive dreams, her mantle threw.
In sleep-wrought visions he forgets the toils
Of battle, and the horrors of defeat;
Nor hears the wife of Heber touch the nail,
Nor to the fatal hammer put her hand.
Now through the temples of the martial chief
The iron point she drove. Stretch'd at her feet,
Dipp'd in his blood, he groan'd, and, groaning, died!

“ In vain with anxious eye his mother waits
To view his chariot wheels return in pomp;
In vain she from her lattic'd casement cries,
' Why dost thou tarry, O my warrior son?
Why is my hero's car, with vict'ry crown'd,
So long in coming? Son of conquest, haste!
Know ye not, ladies of my train, he stays
Among his valiants, to divide the spoil?
To Sisera robes of purple, shields of gold,
The fairest of the captive damsels fair,
And glitt'ring chains meet for the conq'ror's neck?'
Mistaken dame! low sleeps thy warlike son,
Cold in his narrow house; nor to thy arms,
Nor Hazer's tow'ns, shall e'er again return.
Hazer for dragons shall a dwelling be,

An everlasting desolation ; where
Will no man ever dwell, nor son of man
Visit its ruin'd walls and mould'ring gates ;
While all her princes, and her mighty chiefs,
Shall captives die in regions far remote.

“ So fall, O sov'reign Lord, thine enemies !
So fall thy Israel's foes !—but be thy reign
Refulgent as the sun, nor know a cloud
Its splendid noontide radiance to o'ercast.”

So sang the venerable bard of old ;
Then bowing o'er his harp toward the king,
Resum'd his vacant seat. But Saul heard not
The elder minstrel's song, nor mark'd its close,
For on his clouded brow sat jealous thought
And gloomy care, portending furious storm.
And now Adrammelec, and his colleagues
Of hell and air, crowded unseen the hall,
Eager to execute their vengeful ire
On the young champion of the Hebrew tribes.
Rob'd in a misty cloud, hover'd the fiend
Above his fated slave, who on the throne
In darksome mood sat scowling, and, elate
With hope of final triumph, shook his plumes,
Black as the smoke of hell, with sounds more dread
Than rolls the distant thunder, drowning quite
The symphony melodious of the bards,
Then took possession of his captive's soul.
So the fierce vulture, pois'd on iron wing,

With eye ferocious kens some victim near,
And, wheeling round and round, with sudden plunge
Impetuous pounces on her struggling prey.
Michal, who now discern'd the brow of care
Her sullen father wore, young David woo'd
To strike the harp to such melodious airs
As still were wont to chase the horrid fiend.
Smiling consent he rose. Two pages bore
A full-ton'd instrument of sweetest sound
To Nature's minstrel, who the silver string
Touch'd with preluding melody more soft
Than Echo when she mocks the western breeze;
And thus he sung the tale of other days:—

• “What glorious conq'ror, with his robes deep-dyed
In crimson torrents, cometh from the tow'rs
Of desolated Minnith? Like a wolf
Of the wild mountains, or a lion bold
Among a flock of lambs, in Ammon's host
The mighty he trod down, to pieces tore
Her men of war, and put her chiefs to flight.
On his bright helm sat Vict'ry, on his sword
Death's wrathful angel. Like a field of corn
Laid by the reaper low, so Jephthah fell'd
The children of vile Ammon. Warrior brave,
Fam'd son of Gilead, glory mark'd thy steps!
Aroer trembled at thy glitt'ring spear,
And all her cities fainted at the light
And shining lustre of thy deathful arrows.

Thy shield was red with blood : thy valiant men
In crimson rivers dipp'd their batter'd mail :
The chariots of the foe like lightning flew,
And, justling one another in their fear,
They fell, they tumbled, and bestrew'd the plain.
In vain their horsemen lifted the bright lance,
In vain they rush'd amid the heaps of slain ;
Thou, Jephthah, like a whirlwind sweptst them off
The gory fields of death ; low on the ground
Together fell the riders and their steeds,
And as they fell their smoking blood commixt.
So, when a tempest howling from the north
Shakes autumn's fallow forests, the rude blast
Before it drives in clouds the circling leaves,
That late in verdure blooming smil'd aloft
The greenwood's pride, and scatters them to rot.
The plain of thy fair vineyard is destroy'd,
O haughty Ammon, and thy tow'rs in dust ;
Thy olives are cut down, thy flocks and herds
Become a spoil to Israel. All thy fields
Are fatten'd with the carcasses of those
That fell in battle. There the bird of prey
Feeds on thy princes, and the midnight wolf
Licks thy chief warriors' blood, and frights the moon
With growlings o'er the corses of the slain.
Minnith is fall'n, her cities are no more !
The earth itself was mov'd at the dread sound,
And nations trembled when they heard her fall.

Her shrieks re-echo'd o'er the Red sea's wave,
And Egypt and Philistia shook with fear.
No more the song of triumph shall be heard,
Nor harp, nor lute, nor festive merriment,
Through all her devastated halls and tow'rs :
There now the cormorant and the bittern's wail,
The wild-bat's scream, the raven's fateful croak,
In horrid discord mingle, to delight
The fiend of desolation, who, amid
The ever-falling fragments and dark crags
Of broken battlements and columns sunk,
Enjoys the wreck her crumbling finger makes,
And laughs to hear the mountain lion roar,
As in the halls he rends his blood-mark'd prey,
And with his whelps divides the mangled corse ;
While the green serpent from the falling roof
Hangs hideous with her forked tongue of fire.

“ O, who is she that comes from Mizpeh's gates
To meet the chief of Israel ? In her train
Of blooming virgins, fair and soft as love,
The song of vict'ry, and the pleasant notes
Of viol, theorbo, and timbrel, sound ;
Their feet light as the new-down'd willow leaves,
When gently-waving on the western winds
In airy dances, nigh the conqu'ring chief.
Ah, stay, fair nymph with eye of heav'nly blue,
With voice sweet-ton'd as is the dying swan's,
And cheeks more beauteous e'en than Carmel's fields ;

Stay thy rash footsteps, thy stern sire meet not—
A dreadful oath hath pass'd the warrior's lips !
Ah, chieftain fierce, that cruel vow revoke,
Nor stain the altar of the living God
With a lov'd offspring's blood ! Ah, what avails
The rending of those robes, or that full tear
Of unrelenting pity in thine eye,
Choking all utt'rance, as the virgin kneels
And greets thy splendid triumph on the plains
Of deathful warfare with such smiles of joy ?
Stern, flinty sire, thy oath thou wilt not break,
For thou hast sworn to offer to thy god
Whatever cometh forth from Mizpeh's tow'rs
Thy homeward steps to greet, and she must bleed !
The lovely lamb without a blemish sigh'd,
" If thou thy mouth hast open'd to the Lord,
Do with me as thou wilt, my father dear,
Since God has giv'n thee vengeance on thy foes !
Yet, ere I bleed beneath the sacred knife,
Let me with these, my weeping virgins, go
On Israel's mountains, to bewail the fate
That keeps me from yon youthful warrior's arms."
" Go, ill-starr'd damsel," said her sorrowing sire ;
" When thou return'st I must my vow perform."
But who with mortal hand the strings can touch,
And bid them speak the anguish of the youth,
The valiant Hezir, as he stood beside
The trembling Jephthah, silent with despair ?

The spear and shield dropp'd from his listless grasp,
As with a heav'nly look, serenely sweet,
Yet sad as sweet, and tender e'en as sad,
The lovely maid, amid her wo-struck nymphs,
(Who tore the garlands from their brows, and rent
Their party-colour'd robes) address'd him thus :—

“ Weep not for me ! we soon shall meet again,
Where splendid crowns for suff'ring virtue wait :
With resignation pass a little while

In this sad world, where joy's swift-fading beams
Are soon obscur'd by rising storms of grief,
And we shall join in everlasting bliss.”

Then, tearful, with her mourning nymphs she sought
The mountains' storm-beat wilds.

The hapless youth

Sunk on the bosom of the down-cast sire ;
Their mingled tears of anguish fell in streams,
And from their armour wash'd the crimson stains
Of Ammon's hostile blood. Pale Conquest droop'd
Her golden wing, and from her radiant brow
The laurel tore ; while ev'ry warrior hung
In silent sorrow o'er his battle shield,
Outsighing all the sympathetic winds.
Her days of mourning past, the fated maid
Sad Jephthah's palace sought : the warrior chief,
True to his vow, with garlands led her crown'd,
A lovely sacrifice, to the dread shrine.—

“ Here let me drop the harp ; the frightened strings

Shrink from my trembling fingers. I've no words
To paint the terror of the awe-struck priests,
The father's anguish, nor the lover's groans ;
Nor those sweet smiles of heav'nly innocence,
And fortitude divine, with which the maid
Beheld the lifted knife, and bade farewell
To earth's low cares, and hail'd immortal bliss.
A thousand golden lyres were heard to breathe
Seraphic strains the blood-stain'd altar round.
Though from the cruel sight they turn'd aside
Their wing-veil'd faces, yet were angels seen
On a cerulean cloud with glory lin'd
Her spirit to receive, and with it mount
In fiery globe above the cleaving skies.
Scarce had the circling flames their victim seiz'd,
Ere on the altar virtuous Hezir sunk,
And, broken-hearted, died amid the blaze !
Ye hapless pair, one tomb your dust contains,
And oft your airy forms on silver clouds
Are seen to lean, and listen to the tale,
The warbled tale, the youths and virgins sing,
Circling your narrow bed ; while ev'ning weeps
Her moonlight dew upon the osier bough,
Which o'er your green turf mournfully doth bend
To all the winds that sigh your grave around.
There yearly they your hapless fate bewail,
With maiden flowers deck your bridal tomb,
And round it scatter all the bloomy sweets

Of early summer to the pitying breeze,
That swan-like on your dust in music dies.”^m

So sung th’ anointed minstrel. Ev’ry breast
Heav’d with responsive sorrow, and a tear
Hung glitt’ring in the eyelid of each fair,
Like dew-drops in the early beam of Sol.
All but the frowning king applaud the bard,
On whom a look th’ enamour’d princess cast,
That tenderness unutt’rable convey’d.
Still firm possession kept Adrammelec
Of Saul’s lymphatic bosom, e’en in spite
Of music’s fascination: there he reign’d,
And set the passions in an uproar wild,
As tempests vex the ocean’s fretful surge.
Dark in his anger as the midnight storm,
The king arose, while from his rolling eye
The lightning of infernal fury flash’d,
Presageful of the thunder’s dread approach.
Wrathful he stood; stern as Achilles, when
He dragg’d around the walls of fated Troy
Her chieftain’s mangled corse. His roaring voice
Was as the hungry lion’s when he roams
The Libyan deserts; deep as Lebanon’s
When all his storm-shook cedars, bowing low,
Speak to the passing gust.

“Warriors,” he cried,
“Of Israel, there is treason lurking here
Within my palace walls. I am not safe

E'en on my throne. There stands a new-made chief
Now in our presence, who with impious hands
Would snatch the crown from off my brow, while you
Sit idle lookers-on; nay, more—applaud
The regicide who waits to stab his king!
Such sons are mine, such subjects do I rule,
That I am no where safe, till my own hand
Shall rid me of the foe that seeks my fall.
For while th' ambitious slave, who on one deed
Of val'rous enterprise presumes to step
Up to this kingly seat, and stretch his hand
To push me thence—while he, I say, exists,
A thousand dark conspiracies will rise
To disenthroned your sov'reign, and to take
This new-establish'd kingdom from his house."

To whom the princely Jonathan replied:—

"What means my lord? Sure there are present none
But loving subjects to thy throne and state!
I read it in their eyes—all here would die
With pleasure to support our royal house."

"No, there is one," respake th' infuriate Saul,
"Whom thou hast chos'n, perverse, rebellious boy,
To thy confusion; one who, while he breathes,
Thou or thy kingdom cannot be secure.

Amid the princes I behold him now:
But soon shall this exterminating arm
Rid me at once of all my fears, and strike
The bold aspiring reptile to the earth."

He had proceeded with his boist'rous rant,
While dumb inquiry look'd from every eye,
Unweeting where to find the traitor out :
But wonder, though possess'd, now silenc'd him,
For instantly a thousand dreadful peals
Of lightning-winged thunders burst at once
O'er the proud palace, shaking all its tow'rs
With noise far more terrific than resounds
Through those bleak northern vales of Tartary,
Where the Selanga rolls into the main.
A tempest, that out-rav'd the thunder's voice,
Bellow'd without, but soon in all its rage
The portals burst, and rush'd through the saloon ;
While its swift heels a sparkling blaze pursu'd,
That died not as it pass'd, but, lingering, shed
A ray of horrid light miraculous
Around th' astonish'd guests, who at the feast
Sat motionless with fear. Across the dome
The candent bolt, with most horrific crash,
Its wild career began. And now on clouds,
Dark as the raven's plumage, Endor's witch,
Half-viewless, enters ; with her a foul train,
Clad in appalling horrors, throng the hall—
Blue meagre hags, and flame-envelop'd sprites !
Mute is the harp, and still the minstrel's voice.
The shriek of terror, and the damsel's scream,
As in her warrior's arms she fainting sinks,
Sound through the storm, and fill up every pause

That steals between the thunders. “ Chiefs of hell,
Ye trusted that the king, in frensied mood,
Would with his gaveloc the heart transpierce
Of the imperial minstrel, son of fame,
As 'neath the throne he stood in wild amaze ;
Therefore ye, with delusive mockery,
Sev'n times did to him bow : he, dauntless youth,
Display'd a more heroic brav'ry now,
Than even in the battle-field he show'd ;
And, though a mortal by fell dæmons hemm'd,
Stood undismay'd. Again they bow'd, and cried,
' Hail, king anointed ! Prince of Judah, hail !
Great king of Hebron, king of Sion, hail !
Hail, universal king of Israel's tribes !
The royal sceptre soon thy hand shall seize,
And thou shalt be the father of a race
Of mighty kings, who at Jerusalem
Shall in successive regal splendours reign !' ”

While as they spake, along the pillar'd aisle
That open'd to the hall, where brightest play'd
The ling'ring gleams of green and purple flame,
Pass'd in illusion num'rous kingly forms
With sparkling crowns, that through a magic glass,
Held by a fiend before the eye of Saul,
Appear'd heroic David's sceptred race,
Treading beneath their feet the house of Kish.
In hell's delirium wrapt, the raving king
Cried with a voice that drown'd the thunder peal,

“ Illusive forms, ye images accurst,
Fantastic shadows of a line I hate,
I’ll see no more ; hence, hence to hell, ye shades !
Sink to perdition ! No, ye shall not tear
The crown from off these brows ! Ha ! why, by heav’n
And all that’s holy, ’tis no longer here !
’Tis gone ; ’tis from my burning temples pluck’d,
And on that traitor’s head already set !
But he and his detested house I’ll slay ;
Not one shall ’scape my fury.” His wild eye
Now met the form of David near the throne ;
To whom, of Endor she the sorc’ress, bow’d,
And to him held the crown some dæmon hand
Had, unperceiv’d, snatch’d from the brow of Saul.
“ Hell and distraction ! see, they to the son
Of Jesse give my regal diadem !
This to thy heart !—Die, traitor ; die accurs’d ! ”
Loud yelling, the infuriate monarch hurl’d
A pointed jav’lin at the guiltless youth ;
But Abdiel blest, with shield invincible,
Who ever near him stood in time of need,
Guarded his noble charge, and push’d aside
The hurtless weapon ; which curs’d Endor’s hand
Gave back to Saul again. Again he lifts
His vengeful arm to strike a second blow :
With shrieks of terror, piercing every heart,
The weeping princess flings her snow-white arms
Around her lover, hoping to preserve

The injur'd youth from her mad father's ire.
Drunk with his fury, he regards not her :
Again he hurls the jav'lin, and again
The angel on his shield receives the point,
As David backward steps to shun the blow,
And, rushing from the hall, escapes the king.

END OF BOOK IV.

THE ROYAL MINSTREL.

BOOK V.

THE ARGUMENT.

Saul sends David to bring him two hundred heads of the warriors of Philistia as a dowry for his daughter—Michal mourns his absence—the episode of the captive Thirza—David returns, bringing with him the heads of the Philistines—amongst them Thirza beholds that of her husband, and dies with grief—Saul consents to give the princess to David—the marriage rites, which the archangel Michael, tutelar prince of the Hebrews, honours with his presence. •

THE ROYAL MINSTREL.

BOOK V.

As when the rude night-tempests cease to roar,
And ocean heaves no more its foam-capt surge
Against the face of heav'n, nor climbs the rock
To wash the luckless shipwreck'd sea-boy thence ;
But, spent with rage, stretches its lubbard arms
Along the shores low-growling, while the moon
Slow from the eastern clouds of sable hue,
Which radiant glory deeply borders round,
Emerging, trembles to survey the wrecks
And murders of its felon waves that sleep
Reckless beneath them floating : so, the fiend
Quitting the bosom of the jealous Saul,
Reason's mild ray faint o'er his mind arose,
Still darken'd with foul shades of gloomy care,
And vengeful thoughts, that meditated death
On guiltless David's head. Many the plans
He form'd to rid him of the noble youth.
At length he was resolv'd the hero brave

Should with an army forth be sent, to make
Incursions on Philistia's bord'ers.
He swore his daughter Michal, whose fond love
For David he had learnt, should be his wife,
If for her dowry he two hundred headsⁿ
Of Ascalon's chief warriors brought him back.
Of vict'ry confident, th' anointed youth
His gonfalon to the light winds unfurl'd,
Marshall'd his bands, then forth his war-blade drew,
And tow'rds Philistia's bounds securely march'd.
But the fell king of men, with savage joy,
While at the palace gates he bade farewell
To the aspiring champion, inly laugh'd
To view his ardour as in arms he shone,
New deeds of immortality t' achieve;
Full well assur'd he from the battle-field
To Israel's land would ne'er again return.

Meanwhile, amid a venerable grove
Of cedar, cypress, sycamore, and pine,
Where stood her fav'rite bow'r, the princess pass'd,
With all her damsel train, the lovelorn hours.
Here, as the orient sun with sparkling ray
Shot through the flow'r-besprinkled alleys green
His golden radiance, and when ev'ning mild
Awoke th' enchanting lay of Philomel,
While echo mimick'd every liquid note
Along the moonlight vista, on a bank
With asphodel and the narcissus deck'd,

And by the blushing musk-rose canopied,
Fair Michal sat, and in this lov'd retreat
(Become since David, 'mid its shades, to her
His earliest vows had plighted, most endear'd)
Listen'd to hear th' alternate monody
Of her kind maids, as thus they touch'd the lute
To tales of love; while her fair skilful hand
The tap'stry with her hero's shining deeds
Gaily adorn'd, in colours exquisite.

Ye gales that wanton o'er the lea,
And court the balmy grove,
Waft hence my sighs, and haste to me
Elzaphan, whom I love.
For him Aurora's purple bow'rs
With roses bloom anew;
Where Zephyrs sleep at noon on flow'rs,
And bathe in honey dew.

For him I've pluck'd sweet daffodils,
And this green garland wove;
For him yon lark her sonnet thrills
Through the breeze-kissing grove.
The moonlight vale, the morn's soft charms,
While he is absent, fade;
Haste hither, then, nor let these arms
Still fold thy fancied shade.

Far o'er the western deep to distant climes
My hero sail'd, a barb'rous foe to quell ;

Yet from the blood-red plains of war,
Where Vict'ry round his brows her chaplet binds,
Comes not his battle-car.

His banners rise not from the foam-crown'd surge,
Nor gleams his spear o'er the blue wavy verge
Of ocean's distant billow :

Ah wherefore, warrior, com'st thou not from far,
That I my harp may snatch from yonder willow,
Thy homeward steps to greet
With songs of triumph for a conq'ror meet ?

The storms are past, the blust'ring wind's at rest,
And her soft lullaby the halcyon sings,
While sailing o'er the sleepy ocean's breast,
Where to the breezes spreads the bark her wings.
But ah, in vain I watch with anxious eye,
To greet th' appearance of my hero's sail,
Slow o'er the green wave rising, white
As summer cloud with sunbeam bright ;
Beneath the deep he sleeps, nor heeds my sigh,
Nor from his sea-beat darksome bed,
In ocean's caves of coral red,
Hears on her surge-lav'd rock Mahala's wail.

Across the billows stalks again the storm,
The mountain surges lash the groaning shore ;

See the dread lightning's flash ! and lo, his form
Sits on yon cloud, and listens to the roar.
Hark ! now his hollow voice sounds in the wind,
‘ Weep not for me, I shall return no more !
No longer seek me, for thou ne'er shalt find
Thy warrior, who beneath the cold wild deep
Lies on his wat'ry bier in everlasting sleep !’

Sweet strains of hope some angel sings,
To cheer the virgin's heart ;
Where tender love's fond image clings,
Though doom'd, alas, to part !

Ah, who is she, whose cherub smile
Can every gloomy care beguile ?
Whose magic accents, sweetly mild,
Can sooth the maniac's ravings wild ;
And to his frensied grasp bestow
Ideal forms to calm his direst woe !

O, lovely hope, with eyes so blue,
Bright as the calm sea's azure hue
When, from his western throne, the sun
Flings his last ray the wave upon :
The blood-dy'd brand thou turn'st aside
From noble David's breast ;
Nor pain, nor peril, shall betide
The champion, in the madd'ning fray,

And, ere the close of day,
He shall return in conquest drest ;
Then sweet, O sweet, will be the warrior's rest
Vict'ry shall lead him to fair Michal's arms
In martial pomp, and love's alarms '
Alone shall then her breast pervade,
While glory sheaths her hero's battle-blade !

“ Your music, gentle virgins, makes me sad,”
Said the bright daughter of the Hebrew king,
“ Therefore lay by awhile your sounding lyres,
For I am sick at heart with fear of ill.
Not for his country now brave David draws
His trusty blade ; but, to obtain my hand
In marriage, he must wade through seas of blood,
And brave a host of dangers. Cruel sire !
Has he not done enough to merit me,
That his dear life must be expos'd afresh
To all the horrors of wide-wasting war ?
O, had I been a cottage damsel born,
The daughter of a shepherd, not a king,
Then we had met beneath the palm-trees' shade,
And tasted all the bliss of virtuous love,
Untainted with a fear. Methinks 'twere heav'n
To be a shepherd-girl with him I love !
Woke by the lark, then joyous would I drive
My flocks afield, and hail the morn with songs ;
And, when at noon beneath some myrtle shade,

Impervious to the sun-beam, he reclin'd,
Sooth'd by the murmur of the hoarse cascade,
And his mellifluous reed attun'd to love,
I'd weave sweet chaplets to adorn his brows,
Undipp'd in blood, unsullied with a tear.
How happy then would whirl the hours away,
Estrang'd to all those cares that wait on pomp!"

"O, mourn not thus," replied Jochebeda,
(A beauteous maiden of the vestal train)
"Three days are scarcely past, since, to avenge
Your royal father on his enemies,
The proud Philistines, your lov'd David went
To dare them to the fray, and with him bring
Two hundred of their choicest warriors' heads,
The dowry that ensures to him your hand.
Then why these tears, my princely lady bright,
The God of Israel will preserve the chief,
And send a guardian angel to enshield
His dauntless bosom 'mid the dreadful strife,
And to your arms return the victor safe."

"Prophetic be thy words! but ah, sweet maid,
Love hath as many fears as tender hopes,
And ev'ry fear a host of darts to wound
The panting breast of sensibility,
Where the soft passions dwell." "Yet, lady, Hope
Stands smiling by, and cordial balm applies
To ev'ry wound foreboding fear inflicts,
And keeps off fell despair." "Jochebeda,"

Respake the princess, "haste, and instantly
Lead here the lady Thirza, whom the guards,
Roaming Philistia's southern coast erewhile,
'Mong other captives, to the court did bring.
In sooth, I for the poor forlorn one feel
A more than common pity and esteem.
Her form is beauty's paragon; her air
And mien bespeak her of exalted rank;
While such the secret sorrows of her heart,
That she creates a magic sympathy
In ev'ry tender bosom." Thirza now
With slow and pensive step the grove approach'd.
Her sylph-like form mov'd with a native grace
Peculiar to itself; her lovely eyes
Shot liquid radiance, soften'd by her tears,
Like April's sun-beams through ambrosial show'rs.
So lovely and so mournful look'd the nymph
Whom gloomy Dis in Enna's verdant fields
Caught gath'ring wild-flow'rs, and to hell convey'd.

"Sweet lady, daughter of a house unknown,"
Said Michal, "I would fain thy sorrows learn,
Since such a friendship for thee do I feel,
As though thou wast my sister: from this hour
Command the little int'rest I possess
In this my father's court. I'll daily strive,
Sweet damsel bright, to soften thy distress,
And soothe the mis'ries of captivity."

"Alas," return'd fair Thirza, azure-ey'd,

“ Captivity is least of all the ills
I mourn ; for there remain in this sad world
Nor home, nor friends, nor joy, nor hope, for me.”

“ O, say not so,” the princess quick replied,
“ A home awaits thee here in this gay court ;
No longer shalt thou be a captive maid
Forlorn and hopeless, for, in truth, I vow
I’ll study how to lighten all thy woes,
And make thee free and happy as the birds
That flutter through these groves on painted wing,
And in shrill warblings clearly speak their joy.”

“ O, gentle princess, these swift-flowing tears
Alone must speak my thanks ; but, if my heart,
My bursting heart, will suffer me, I’ll tell
The gloomy tale of my despairful grief :

“ A warrior chief, in princely Agag’s court,
My father was, and, when your royal sire
His realms invaded, follow’d him t’ th’ wars.
I need not here relate the hapless fate
Of Agag and his host. Your father’s arms
Victorious prov’d, and, such his furious rage,
He spar’d nor merit, rank, nor age, nor sex.
Among the rest, my wounded father fled
The field of slaughter, where avail’d nor strength,
Nor human valour ; for your gods themselves
Fought in your ranks, and who could stand their ire ?
But flight was all in vain : the Hebrew guards
My sire pursued, who scarce had reach’d his home,

And in his mailed arms, besmear'd with blood,
(The blood that from his spear-pierc'd bosom flow'd)
My shrieking mother snatch'd, to bear her thence,
When clash of sounding shields and shouts were heard.
'Twas now too late ; the foe our home beset,
Our guards were slain, deep streams of blood flow'd round
The dwelling late of social peace and love,
And soon the mantling flames envelop'd all.
My parents in each other's arms expir'd,
Amid the conflagration's fiery gulf!
O, when I on their hapless fate reflect
My brain seems frensied, and the direful scene
Of blazing tow'rs, of carnage, shrieks, and death,
My eyeballs sear with ecstasy of pain !
Why was *I* sav'd to know still greater woes ?
O, had I perish'd in that dismal hour,
And with the ashes of my warlike sire
And hapless mother, 'mid the burning pile,
My smoking bones commingled, I'd been blest !
But no !—a lover's arms through flames and blood,
With more than mortal courage, bore me safe
Far from the roar of death, that died away
Upon our fear-wing'd steps ; and ere the morn
We were beyond the reach of all our foes.
Towards the lofty tow'rs of Ascalon
Bending our flight, we there kind refuge found. .
When time and Ezar's love of half my grief,
For loss of friends and home, had me beguil'd,

The sacred priest in marriage join'd our hands.
But ah, too soon the thund'ring shouts of war
Call'd my lov'd hero to the tented field !
His fate I know not ; pale and cold he lies,
I fear me, on the battle-plain, a prey
To the grim wolf, beneath the chilly blast
That howls across the desert. Will no friend
Conduct me to my slaughter'd, bleeding lord ?
Some faint remains of life may wander still
O'er his pale cheek, may falter on his tongue.
O, could I press him in my warm embrace,
Close his dim eyes, and die upon his breast !—
But that is bliss too great for wretched me ;
Since scarce three days his absence had I mourn'd,
When a fierce band, sent from the Hebrew camp
To rove the borders of Philistia's land,
Me and my virgin train all captives made,
As off'rings I to Dagon's temple bore,
That in a sacred grove sequester'd stood
Far distant from the city's tower'd walls,
And sent us to your royal father's court.
Thus, lady, in your friendly ear I've pour'd
The story of my woes. Ah, wo is me,
That I should live the story to rehearse !”

“ Nay, yet there's hope your lord may still survive
The rage of war, and to your arms return,”
Replied the princess.—“ Ha, see, damsels, see !
The warden of the palace watch-tow'r lies

Across the grove, his steps are wing'd with speed ;
Tidings of import his approach foretell."

" The victor comes—the champion of our land !"
Exclaim'd the well-pleas'd watchman, as he now
Breathless with haste enter'd sweet Michal's bow'r.
" From yonder turrets I his ensign saw
Float proudly on the winds ; saw all the spears
Of his brave warriors, as adown the hills
They slowly march'd, crown'd with Philistine heads."

" Ha, then my lord, my destin'd husband, lives—"
The princess cried—" these shouts his triumph speak !
If he from wounds be safe, what bliss for me !
Come, let us meet him, as before the king
The chieftains pass in pageantry august,
With all their spoils in fields immortal won,
While shouts and pæans thunder to the skies."

" Ere now the hated David's carcass lies
Stretch'd on the war-plain, for the kites a feast ;
Or all my schemes are, by the agency
Of angel or of dæmon genius, foil'd ;"
Said Saul, as, mutt'ring to himself, he cross'd
The vestibule that to his arm'ry led ;
" So few his band, while half those few he leads
Are inexperience'd in the hostile field.
So well have I contriv'd to make him fall,
That, let the bold Philistines but confront
The hardy upstart with their wonted fire,
And not his better angel him can save,

Tho' Heav'n's own minion, from their wrathful swords.
O, I could rend him as the lion tears
The trembling kid, and drink his very blood
T' assuage the burning thirst of my revenge!
O, I would rather see his rebel heart
Return'd me on the jav'lin's glitt'ring point,
Than view my palace halls strew'd with the heads
Of all the flow'r of proud Philistia's chiefs,
Though they were heap'd thick as the yellow leaves
That carpet autumn's groves; yet would I turn
Ungratified by such a scene away,
To kiss the spear tipt with young David's gore,
And think each drop that crimson'd its bright point
More precious than a thousand skulls, though topp'd
From shoulders of the Beneanak fierce!——
What, if his better genius should prevail,
And bring him home a conq'ror? Horrid thought!
Can I retract, and break my solemn word
To give my daughter to him? No, I fear
Revolt among my guards. I fear this boy
Would lift rebellion's sword against my breast,
And snatch the crown from off my very brow.
What do I feel, O hell! to think I fear
As well as hate this daring shepherd-boy!
But no! the bold young tiger, panting for his prey,
Hath blindly run into the toils I set,
Or ere this hour the trumpet had proclaim'd

His boastful triumph. Yes, he must have fall'n
By brave Philistine swords. O that my ears
Could feast upon the music of his groans !
That I could see his quiv'ring heart laid bare,
And in its oozing current dip my robe,
Then thunder in his ears my bitt'rest curse,
And bid farewell to fear!—Distraction ! fiends !
Let darkness hide me !—what curst sounds are those ?”

“ The trumpets of young David the renown'd,”
Replied a chief who enter'd to the king ;
He comes to Gibeah with two hundred heads
Of proud Phenicia's warriors.” “ Slave, thou liest !
David is slain,” cried Saul, with frantic tone
And gesture that proclaim'd him half distraught ;
“ And yet it cannot be, for I behold
His standard waving to the strumpet breeze
That lovingly unfolds it to the heav'ns,
While all his spearmen on their jav'lins bear
A cloud of blood-stain'd heads. How shall I meet
This hateful victor ? with my weapon's point,
And nobly stab the traitor to the heart ?
Or, with the smiles of falsehood, in these arms,
That rather would the basilisk embrace,
And hug the grim hyæna, press him close,
Wearing a face of fond paternal love,
As though I gloried to behold his brows
With new-won garlands bound ? Yes ; vengeance, down !

Smother thy fires, fell hate ! some future time
Thou shalt burst forth, and, like the lightning's flash,
Consume thy fated victim !—But he comes.”

The sounding minstrelsy and high parade
Of marshall'd bands pass'd on before the king ;
And next two hundred spearmen, bearing each
His gav'loc, crown'd with a stern warrior's head ;
Last came their leader, clad in blood-stain'd mail .
His buckler, stuck with many a broken dart,
Look'd like a grove rent by a thunder-storm ;
And his broad glave, red to the very hilt,
Seem'd dreadful as the candent bolt of Jove.
Now suddenly the princess, with her hand
In blue-eyed Thirza's, cross'd the portico ;
Joy wing'd her steps, and rapture fir'd her eye,
As she, unmindful of her friend, and all
Who throng'd the court, save him she flew to meet,
With open arms her warrior welcom'd back.
As love itself warm her embrace had been,
But that a frown her father's brow deform'd,
Checking the ardour of her chaste salute.
Pleasure, that from her azure eyes look'd out
Through a bright pearly tear, like morning beams
Broke from a roseate cloud distilling dew,
Spoke volumes of affection, as she turn'd
With tender smiles from her mail-harness'd lord,
To seek her friend amid the crowded hall.

Like to a lonely star-beam, sometimes seen

By midnight pilgrim 'twixt the passing storms,
The shudd'ring Thirza, with chill terror struck,
Through the dark-visag'd warriors hasten'd on;
Who, busied with the trophies of their might,
Round the saloon were piling them in heaps,
Regardless of her beauty or her tears;
As is the fell-ey'd wolf, by some clear stream
Cramming his gorge with human carcasses,
To the sweet moonbeam trembling on its wave.
The entrance to the hall of state she reach'd
Just as a spearman by the gory locks
Held up a chieftain's head before her eyes,
And cried, "Place this upon the palace gates;
For he who wore it on his shoulders fought
With more than mortal courage, and deserves
A station lofty as his daring soul."
O, ill-starr'd Thirza, 'twas thy hapless fate
To see the clotted locks, the blood-smear'd face,
And know it for thy lord's. " 'Tis he! 'tis he!
My only life!" with piercing shrieks she cried;
And, wildly seizing by its raven curls
The gory head, in frantic agony
Utter'd a dismal groan—then sunk and died!

Each warrior's flinty bosom seem'd to yield
To momentary pity, and forgot
Its long-acquired sternness. Michal wept
A flood of tears for wretched Thirza's fate,
And would have follow'd as the guards convey'd

Her body to the tomb, had not the king,
With brow unbent by sweet compassion, call'd
The tearful virgin back ; when David thus,
Low bowing to him, his attention won :

“ So perish, O my lord, thy foemen all,
As these have fall'n ! Behold the dowry claim'd
For this fair princess ! Hadst thou ask'd, O king,
A thousand heads, the price had been too small
For such exalted beauty. Thy poor slave
Two hundred zuzims ° for her could not give,
Since he no portion vaunts save this good sword ;
But for each zuzim he presents thee now
A warman's mangled skull. A right keen blade
Each chieftain wore, whose blood this day distains
Thy palace walls ; and manfully did he
Brandish that blade, ere he resign'd his head
To grace thy servant's triumph. These, my lord,
No vulgar foemen were ; each was a prince
Among his martial kindred ; each had oft
The iron chariot, with its burning wheels,
Through the loud battle's fiercest uproar driv'n,
Or on the war-horse thunder'd 'mid the ranks
Of panting fight, and Israel's host defied.”

“ Well hast thou done,” cried Saul, as now he veil'd
Beneath dissimulation's close-wrought robe
The ranc'rous hate he bore the noble youth ;
“ The princess is thy own, thou merit'st her,
And this glad night shall crown thy faithful vows.

Sev'n days of feasting, as by rule foregoes
A youthful virgin's nuptials, shall succeed
The consummation of thy marriage rites ;
Then, ye brave princes and assembled chiefs,
With revelry and mirth the hours shall pass,
Devoted by the customs of our tribes
To bridal ceremonies. Hence, my chiefs,
Prepare yourselves to meet me in the court
That to the gardens of the palace opes,
Where, in his gorgeous robes, the priest shall join
The loveliest pair e'er link'd in wedlock's bands."

All now dispers'd, each one his sev'ral way ;
And through the palace nought but hurry reign'd,
And busy preparation. Brightly rose
O'er Gibeah's aulic tow'rs the full-orb'd moon,
And through the regal halls pale, shadowy, gleam'd ;
Where, by her silver light, were seen to move
A crowd of warlike spectres fiercely grim,
Who, bending o'er the piles of ghastly heads,
Shriek'd fearful vengeance on the cruel Saul.
But in the west, unseen by mortal eye,
Michael, the prince of Israel's tribes,⁹ appear'd
With a long train, outshining all the stars,
And splendid as that troop celestial who
At Bethlem to the darkling shepherds sung,
Descending from the empyrëan, where
The orders bright, and hierarchy divine,
Their faces veil before th' eternal throne ;

And, sailing on the bosom of a cloud,
That o'er the skies a flood of glory cast,
Alighted at the palace of the king,
To honour David's spousal. Now were plac'd
Cherubic guards and sparkling seraphim
The tow'rs around ; while in each avenue
Celestial swords, that thunderbolts outflam'd,
Flash'd vengeance on those pow'rs of hell and air
Who sought to mingle with the bridal guests.
Meanwhile the grand procession slowly mov'd
Toward the court, that with innum'rous lamps
Shone brilliant, and illum'd the myrtle groves
And citron bow'rs which bloom'd the gardens round ;
Whence through the marble colonnade was borne,
On the Favonian breezes' silken wings,
Redundant fragrance ; while clear fountains fill'd
The spicy air with music, as they cast
Their sheeny waters forth, which, glitt'ring, fell
In beauteous show'rs and liquid columns bright,
That, by the twinkling of the starry lamps,
With magic colouring like the rainbow beam'd.
But O, these earthly splendours, how they fade
And palely die away, as now the court
Michael, the prince of Israel, and the chief
In heav'n of thrones^a that minister to God,
Enters, in radiance cloth'd seraphical !
As in the west the morning star expires ;
As in the grove the glow-worm's fairy ray

Sickens and dies, when in the orient clime
The flaming sun ascends his golden car,
And from his peerless face each cloud removes ;
So all sublun'ry grandeur seems absorb'd
In the full blaze of Michael's heav'n-bright pomp.

Now enter'd in his royal robes of state
The dark-brow'd king, leading the matchless bride.
The hue of modesty that ting'd her cheek
Outvied the roseate blushes of the morn ;
Her auburn locks, lovelier than crown'd the brow
Of ruddy Hebe, were with myrtle green
And new-blown roses sweetly interwove ;
While o'er her costly robes a milk-white veil
Flow'd graceful from her head, thro' which her charms
Shone like the moon, when in th' unruffled deep
With stedfast look her image she beholds,
And o'er her lucid face serenely draws
A fleecy vapour, fair as mountain snows,
To check the sea-boy as he upward casts
His laughing eye to gaze her beauty on.
With grace angelic did the princess move,
And dignity in ev'ry action spoke
The damsel nobly born ; while, as she mov'd,
She seem'd chaste Dian, fam'd amid the groves.
A nymph-like troop attended on her steps,
Who strew'd the court with flow'rs of varied hue
And aromatic fragrance, as they sung
Soft ditties to the bardish harp and lute

That loud the hymenæal chorus swell'd.
David the brave, and Jonathan the prince,
Created master of the spousal feast,
Enter'd amid the shouts and songs of joy
That sounded through the palace. With them came
The princes and the chiefs, a warlike crowd,
Array'd in martial pomp. Next mov'd the priests
And Levites, a long train, to golden lyres,
Sacred to God, chanting the marriage hymn.
Last came the high-priest, in pontific garb
Of splendour most inimitably grand ;
His mitre^r like a fiery comet shone,
And on his ephod of cerulean dye
The fulgent breastplate bicker'd like the sun ,
Just o'er the blue wave ris'n. Yet more than all
The Urim and the Thummim dreadful blaz'd,^s
As they confronted now the radiant face
Of Israel's godlike tutelary prince ;
And burning rays, insufferably bright,
On the beholders shed, who, struck with awe,
In dumb solemnity their faces veil'd,
And lowly bow'd to heav'n. Again the bards
Their harps strike loud ; again the bridal song,
In chorus full, awakes sublimely sweet ;
As to a throne, o'erhung with crimson, gold,
And flow'ry wreaths, Ahimelech, the chief
Of Aaron's sons, now leads the charming pair ;
Unmatch'd for charms, as ancient minstrels sing,

By any, since in Eden's happy bow'rs
The primal pair by God himself were join'd !
Loose o'er the shoulders of the bridegroom flow'd
A purple mantle set with precious stones ;
The bow of Jonathan, renown'd in song,
Hung careless by his side ; there too the sword
So oft encrimson'd with Philistine blood,
The terror of the foe, gleam'd fiercely bright.
His high-wrought mail of steel, in battle won,
Cast forth redundant rays ; yet did his eyes,
Pleasure-illum'd, outshine the richest gems
That on his gorgeous war-apparel beam'd,
As at the princess he right fondly gaz'd,
While from their orbs love's radiant lightnings shot,
Flinging a magic beauty o'er his face,
That seem'd to those around cherubical.
Fast by his side a silver lyre was slung,
Which breath'd immortal numbers ; on his brow,
Half hid by bright Hyperion's golden curls,
Was plac'd a crown of diamonds and of flow'rs,
Inwoven by the curious hand of art,
And such as Israel's princely bridegrooms wore.
A crystal goblet now of wine was brought,
Which the high pontiff bless'd, then to the pair,
The nuptial pair, presented it with smiles.
The sacred blood of the rich vine they quaff'd,
That seem'd the drink of gods, inspiring joys,
And love expressless, in these lovers' hearts.

The prince-like David with a mystic ring
Espous'd his royal bride ; again the wine
Was by a priest unto the pontiff brought,
And six times bless'd ; then by the wedded pair
Drank, 'mid the gratulations and acclaim
Of shouting multitudes that throng'd the court.
E'en the dark king, as in the gen'ral joy
He, like a tow'r that black'ning flames have sear'd
Amid a blooming landscape, proudly stood,
The savage fierceness of his soul forgot,
And felt his iron heart dilate and yield
To soft sensations of unmixt delight,
As melts the mountain snow at day's decline
Beneath the wintry sun's low-setting ray ;
While o'er his gloomy visage pleasure's beam
Flash'd transient, as across the midnight storm
The nimble lightning's fitful glimpses pass,
And horror more horrific make. And now,
The marriage-rites perform'd, i' th' hall of shields,
Before the throne of the imperial Saul,
A grand regalement, serv'd in gold, receiv'd
The princes and the chiefs of Israël's land.
Gay pleasantry, and feasting unprofan'd,
Resounded loudly through the grand divan ;
Nor were there wanting, to enhance the joy
And glad the lightsome heart, the sportive dance,
In mazy circles bounding round the dome
To measures heav'nly sweet ; nor song of bards,

That breath'd heroic acts of high emprise
To the soft tinkling of the dulcet harp,
Which fill'd the wine-cheer'd warrior's soul with fire ;
Who, as he felt the kindling rapture lift
His spirit to achieve like noble deeds,
Grasp'd hard his sword, and fancied that he heard
The clashing onset thunder in his ears !
O, how unlike the bacchanalian feasts,
And all the rites obscene, of heathen gods !
For dæmon, sprite, nor meagre hag accurst,
This banquet of the princes dar'd approach.
The seraph-guards, that hemm'd the palace walls,
Forbade access to midnight sorcery,
And all its spells defied. Aghast the pow'rs
Of darkness fled when they beheld the train
(Well known in heav'n and hell) of Israel's prince,
Chief of celestial thrones, the regal tow'rs
Flaming around, thick as the stars that form
The galaxy, whose spangled belt adorns
Yon deep-blue arch, th' omnific thund'rer's path.

So skulking spies their foemen's camp approach,
Wrapt in the tempest-ruffled cloke of Night,
Till they behold their ruddy fires of watch
Amid the tents bright streaming on the winds,
Which show the sentry, as with careful step
He walks the green intrenchments lonely round ;
Who, when he hears the tread of distant feet,
Mix'd with the murmurs of the rising blast,

Sounds an alarm that strikes them cold with fear ;
They, list'ning, tremulous awhile remain,
Then, turning on the wings of terror, seek
In speedy flight their safety.—

But, O Muse,
How shall thy feeble numbers speak the bliss,
As o'er the lyre a falt'ring hand thou fling'st,
The bliss immeas'urable of virtuous love,
Which this blest pair, the pride of Canaan's plains,
Amid the hour of gay festivity
So exquisitely felt? The trembling strings
Not Sappho's hand could bid them numbers breathe
Expressive of such mutual ecstasies !
Eternal joys, on love's soft pinions borne,
Hover around their aloe-scented couch,
And Morning with her sweetest roses strews
Their pillow, as to ever-new delights
She, laughing, wakes them with her saffron wing.

Now felon time with thievish step led on
The matin hours, and warn'd the revellers
The banquet hall to quit. The dancing ceas'd ;
The minstrels with preluding symphony
The marriage-song awoke ; no voice was mute ;
The pealing chorus with seraphic sounds
Rose sweet and loud, through the gold-vaulted domes,
As the assembly, by the high-priest led,
Mov'd in magnificent procession on
To worship at the hill of sacrifice.

A hundred lambs, white as the wind-driv'n snow,
From Carmel's flow'ry fields, a hundred bulls
From Bashan's forests, on the altar bled ;—
An off'ring to the everlasting God,
The great Jehovah ! Lowly bow'd the pair,
The wedded pair, in dread solemnity,
And heav'n's high King ador'd. Then there appear'd
A sheeted blaze descending from the skies,
Whose vivid flashes the ethereal arch
Illum'd with streams of glory. Now the flames
Fell on the altar ; through the dark air rose
The red oblation ; and far off was seen
A smoke-involved pillar bright of fire,
Hiding its glowing spires amid the clouds.
Now burst at once, o'er all th' adoring crowd,
Refulgence inconceivably august :
Innum'rous harps such strains seraphic breath'd
As ne'er were heard before by mortal ear :
Celestial odours, such as, when the saints
And hierarchy divine before the throne
Cast down their crowns of gold, inwove with flow'rs,
Fill all the blissful regions of the skies,
The burden'd air perfum'd, transcending far
The sweetest breezes of Arabian groves :
While heav'n itself, in all its glory, seem'd
Now dawning on th' enraptur'd multitude,
Whose senses with bright visions were entranc'd
As by the altar silently they bow'd

In humblest adoration ! Then was seen,
Reveal'd in all the pomp of majesty,
Such majesty immortal and divine
As to angelic potentates belong,
On a transpicious cloud, that glow'd intense
With richest colouring of unnumber'd dyes,
Beside the sacrifice, Michael, the prince
Of Israel, and the chief of many thrones
And dominations in the realms of God.
His armour was of diamond, wrought in heav'n,
Studded with carbuncles, whose rays of fire
Shot brighter radiance than meridian suns.
His robe, dipp'd in the rainbow's beauteous tints,
Across his shoulders flow'd in ample folds,
Graceful and gorgeous as those radiant clouds
That float at eve around the orb of day
When he illumines with flaming pomp the skies,
And from his western throne bids earth adieu :
His burg'net was of Uphaz' finest gold,
Shaded with plumes white as the fleecy mists
That sail upon the morning's early breeze :
But O, his face what mortal could have view'd,
And liv'd ! for he had eyes that would outbeam
The lightning's glare ; and the effulgence pure
Of his blest countenance had sham'd the sun,
Had he been ris'n the opaque earth above,
And made him his diminish'd head conceal.
Chiefs of each order bright around him throng'd ;

And heav'nly squadrons in seraphic arms,
Who to their warbling lyres sweet anthems sung
Of God's unchanging love to fallen man,
Sung David's vict'ries o'er his enemies,
And those great honours destin'd to adorn
His sceptred race, who, in the sov'reign seat
Of wide dominion, should for ever reign.
Saul, in amazement lost, heard not their song,
Which died in music sweetly metrical,
And more melodious than the chiming spheres
On the transported ear, as in the flames
Of the oblation they now upward soar'd.
A globe of light, surpassing all compare,
Enclos'd th' archangel and his glorious train;
Till, fading in immensity of space,
It to the rapt assembly's upturn'd eyes
Seem'd an expiring star, which, now arriv'd
At the ethereal gates of its own heav'n,
With feeblest beam, pale, twinkling, died away.

THE ROYAL MINSTREL.

BOOK VI.

THE ARGUMENT.

Saul, in a full assembly of the princes and chiefs, accuses David of treason—Adriel, the haughty son-in-law of the king, offers to slay him—Jonathan and Abner espouse his cause—David's sudden return from the new war breaks up the council—he rehearses an account of the battle—Saul again possessed, and provoked at the success of David, attempts to kill him—he escapes—Adriel, with a warlike band, surround his abode—he flies to Ramah—is driven from thence by the king—he hides himself at the rock Ezel—the banquet of the new moon—the monarch is enraged to find David's seat empty—he attempts to slay his own son—Jonathan, escaping, repairs to his friend, and informs him of his danger—after mutual protestations of friendship, they part, and David again seeks his safety in flight.

THE ROYAL MINSTREL.

BOOK VI.

THE voice of war too soon the measures drown'd
Of the symphonious lute, and from love's couch
Of amaranth and roses call'd away
Our youthful hero to the battle-field.
Upstarting at the clam'rous trumpet's note,
He buckled on his plumed helm, and grasp'd
His deathful lance; then, rushing from the arms
Of soft-eyed pleasure, flew to meet the foe,
And fight again the battles of his land.
While in the field the bold defender stood
The champion of his nation, Israel's king
Conspir'd to take his life, as a reward
For all his services and hardiment!
And, calling round him his high chiefs and sons,
Amid the proud consist'ry thus began:—

“ Princes and warriors, you behold your king,
If such he still may style himself, a prey

To carping care and ever-anxious fear.
He cannot be at peace while David lives,
That treach'rous rock on which his greatness splits ;
And, though you all behold your shipwreck'd prince,
Amid the boist'rous swell of Danger's deep,
Striding a fragment torn from grandeur's bark,
So late with purple sails and glory rigg'd,
And proud emblazon'd streamers waving bright ;
Yet is there not one present—servants, sons,
Nor martial captains—who will stretch a hand
To save their rightful lord ! Why farewell, then,
To all my envied honours, all my pomp !
Farewell to those gay scenes ambition yields
Th' exalted conq'ror, when she, smiling, strews
His path with deathless laurels ! And farewell
To pow'r, regality, and high command !
Farewell to crown and empire ; and that last
Fond hope to which my soul so long hath clung—
The hope, that, when I in the narrow house
With my forefathers slept, my diadem
Would to my sons, by lineal right, descend !
But farewell all ! for I must set at noon,
Long ere my sun the occident can reach,
If this new luminary of the east
From his proud car of fame be not pluck'd down,
In which he gallops on to sov'reignty,
And all his light trod out i' th' vale of death.
Princes and captains, will this shepherd-boy

Vineyards and lands give you, as I have done,
And make you chiefs and leaders in the field,
That thus you all conspire against your king?
And will not tell him that his trait'rous heir
Hath made a league with Jesse's daring son,
To rob him of his kingdom and his life?
Why wear ye swords, when at your monarch's call
Not one, officious, from its scabbard starts,
To rid him of the foe that seeks his crown?
Yes, one there is, methinks, and one alone,
Among my warrior chieftains, who would still
Uphold our falling house. Thanks, Adriel, thanks;
That half-drawn blade proclaims thy loyalty,
And speaks thee ready to despatch my foe.
Near as thy spousals place thee to our blood,
So near the throne in high authority
Thou worthy art, my noble son, to stand."

To whom, with lofty mien, Adriel now spoke:—
"That I by marriage am allied to thee,
O royal king, will ever be my pride;
Our princely house in opulence and pow'r
Is equal to thine own, as well thou know'st,
The title and pre-eminence of state,
Which unto thee belong as giv'n by Heav'n,
Excepted. Thus, redoubted sire, conjoin'd,
What upstart shall presume to shake thy throne.
While this right arm its trusty brand can wield?
I wear a blade upon my thigh, to serve

My king and father, and will to the hilt
Steep it in blood of traitors! Better he,
Who from thy head the crown attempts to take,
Should pluck the wounded lion by the beard;
Death were not half so certain! But who is
The proud usurper?—David? What is he?
A shepherd-boy, a wand'ring minstrel bred!
And what in Israel is his father's house,
That he should dare to cast a wishful eye
On Israel's diadem? But, prince of men,
Cloud not your days with sad despondency;
This sword, when you command, shall drink his blood,
And lay the rebel lifeless at your feet!"

"Put up thy sword," said Jonathan the brave;
"Were weapons needed to support the throne
On which my father sits, and guard his life
From plotting treason's steel, he should not want
The aid of this ne'er-shrinking arm in fight;
Nor should he stoop to ask support of thee,
Who in the blood of innocence would'st dip
Thy murderous glave! Who is it thou would'st kill?—
The saviour of thy country!—He who fought
In Elah's vale, when thou, and all who here
In presence of my royal father stand,
Turn'd pale with fear, and, dastard-like, shrunk back
Beyond the reach of fell Goliath's spear!
Where was this boldness then? These braggart threats
At best but smell of boastful cowardice!"

Nay, keep thy frowns for those who fear thy pow'r!
I heed thee not, nor tremble at thy looks.
Thou slay the valiant David? Thou destroy
The man I call my friend?—the man I hold
Dear as the vital fountains of my blood?
Whose friendship, pure as seraph's, and sincere
As everlasting truth, and kind as love;
I prize beyond that envied toy, a crown,
And all the pomp of proud regality!"

"I know thou dost prefer, deluded wretch,"
Cried Saul, "the friendship of a rebel slave,
To crowns, to empire, to thy father's life!
Thou, my own son, for whom this anxious soul
Labours to keep the kingdom, that thy heirs
Successively may sit upon the throne,
Barter'st thy birthright, thy inheritance,
For a base anarch's friendship; whose false blood
Thy sword, in justice to thy house, should spill.
But shame light on thee!—thou'rt more vile than he!
David would but a hated rival wrong;
Thou wrong'st thyself, and, worse than all, thy babes!
Robb'st thine own issue of their right, t' endow
A rebel cur, the murd'rer of thy sire!
In a strange vision I, erewhile, beheld
Thy sons beneath curst David's sceptred race
Trode in the dust, as they before me pass'd
Through the long vista of futurity."

"Believe it not, my most renowned lord,"

Said Jonathan ; “ ’twas the illusions false
Of witchcraft, join’d with hell, and all her fiends,
To tempt the king to stain with guiltless blood
His hand, and pull the vengeance of our God
On his devoted head. What means this rage ?
One moon has scarcely pass’d since David came
Victorious from Philistia’s humbled plains,
And with him brought the dowry you did claim
For an alliance with your royal line ;
Then to the youthful warrior’s arms you gave
The princess, your lov’d daughter. Would you now
Destroy the hero whom so late you call’d
Your well-beloved son, when in the face
Of heav’n, and Israel’s congregated tribes,
You to the bosom of your princely house
Took the brave youth, as a reward most just
For his unequall’d merit in the field,
And near your person plac’d in high command ? ”

“ Short-sighted fool ! ” cried Saul, “ hast thou to learn
That I did heap those honours on his head
To sink him deeper in destruction’s gulf ?
It was my policy to make him fall
By other hands than mine. I hop’d, weak boy,
That the brave weapons of Philistia’s bands
Would reach the rebel’s heart ! ’Twas to that end
I ask’d two hundred heads of their prime chiefs,
As a fair dowry for thy sister’s hand ;
Well knowing, that his proud ambitious soul,

Which pants to gain our sov'reign seat of pow'r,
Would stimulate him, like the storm, to rush
Into the fray, and with destruction cope,
But to ascend one step toward the throne.
Yet did his better angel still prevail,
And bare him on the wings of vict'ry home.
And I have now no hope, but that some friend
Among my chiefs here present, whom he strives
In feats of arms and martial exercise
With arrogance vain-glorious to outshine,
Will forth his steely blade right boldly draw,
And rid me of a daring rival foe,
Whom most of all mankind my soul abhors."

"And who is he," said Jonathan, "so vile,
So little fearing God and his just laws,
(Who in his awful tablets hath declar'd
Thou shalt no murder do) that he will dare
To pull upon himself the wrath of heav'n,
And the damnation of a homicide
So horrible! What, slay the innocent?
Strike him who greatly fought to save you all,
Your altars, homes, your children, and your wives,
From ruin, plunder, violation, chains,
And all the horrors of captivity?
Who at this very hour, in hostile fields,
Regardless of himself, wades to the knee
Through streams of blood for you? I see him now
Waving his death-edg'd sword above his head,

And hear him cry amid a host of foes,
‘ I’ll nobly die, or save my native land !’
And ye would recompense such high desert
With midnight murder ; and with ruffian stabs
The life-blood of your brave protector spill !
Jehovah, from his thunder-circled throne,
Looks down on this assembly here conven’d ;
And, if ye draw a blade, or finger lift
To injure guiltless David, will his ire,
In flame-wing’d bolts, lanch on your murd’rous heads !
Ye chiefs of Israel, from yon clouds of heav’n
The ancient patriarchs of our tribes elect
Behold you now ; they weep celestial tears,^t
And fling their golden harps, with which they hymn
Th’ eternal Godhead’s praise, in sorrow down,
To hear the noblest chieftains of their race
In convocation plotting to destroy
The great deliv’rer, rais’d by God himself
To save his people from Philistia’s thrall.
O, most redoubted, but mistaken sire,
You tremble on your throne through fear of him
Whose valour wrought salvation for the land ;
And but for whom you would not have a throne
This day whereon to sit. Had not the youth
Met Gath’s huge giant, who in wild wrath came,
Fierce as the mountain torrent, or the storm,
When groaning pines their tall heads stoop to earth,
Fell as the tigress roaring for her young,

Toss'd on the hunter's spear, your crowned head
Had now lain low in dust, and Israel bow'd
Her neck beneath vile slav'ry's iron yoke,
While her fair diadem, for ever torn
From your imperial house, some heathen foe
Would have usurp'd and rul'd o'er Canaan's coasts.
You say, that for an anarch's friendship I
Have barter'd crowns, dominions, pow'r, and fame ;
Nay, of their patrimony robb'd my heirs,
And stole my offspring's just inheritance,
T' enrich the upstart sons of Jesse's blood :—
But no, my lord, the youth you rebel call,
Of all your chiefs so true, the truest is ;
And with a faithful liegeman's zeal doth seek
To make your name renown'd through distant lands,
T' enlarge the borders of your wide domains,
And lay your foemen all beneath your feet.
Though brave he is as bravest chief of old
That ever sat in vict'ry's sun-bright car,
And dipp'd the hoof of war's red horse in blood,
Yet doth he not to sov'reignty aspire,
Nor harbour in his breast a single thought
Rebellious to your heav'n-appointed rule ;
But loves our house with fervent loyalty,
And to support the splendour of your reign
Would glory e'en to die, as in the field
He leads his follow'rs on to certain fame."

" Thou art with him colleagued, perchance," replied

Adriel the dark, “and meanly think’st to share
The kingdom with this son of Jesse’s house.
Be ’t as it may, ’tis certain that he aims
At something great, by striving thus to win
The hearts of all the people. Not a tongue
But prates his praise; and garrulous old age,
Forgetting all the deeds and warlike feats
Of other days, and nobler chiefs once fam’d,
Babbles of nothing but the swell’d exploits
Of this young minion: while, by nurses taught,
Infancy learns to lisp the envied name
Of peerless David! On him all eyes gaze.
Whene’er he passes through the crowded streets,
Bus’ness and pleasure, pain and joy’s forgot,
To view the hero, who in Elah’s vale
O’ercame the son of Anak. Then, ye chiefs,
When Israel’s war-assembled hosts perceive
His lofty plumes, his steel-bright helm and spear,
Gleaming from far, as to the field he comes
Their bands to marshal to the bloody fray,
Such acclamations and o’erlabour’d shouts
Rend the blue vault, as though the armed ranks
Hail’d the appearance of a heav’n-born god!”

“Well then,” return’d the king with scowling brow,
“If such the popularity that crowns
The fortune of this proud adventurer,
Have I no cause to fear? O, this curst boy
Doth arrogantly thrust himself between

Me and the sunshine of my people's love ;
So that I, sunk in gloom, sit comfortless
And doubtful on my throne, of splendour robb'd ;
Like the faint moon, when by th' umbrageous shade
Darkly eclips'd of the terraqueous globe,
Whose intervening orb in envy keeps
The sun from smiling on her sister star.
Say, princes, (if you be not all like him
Who stands in next degree our empire's heir,)
If in this upstart I have not a foe.
Aye, a most dang'rous foe, who thus can steal
From their allegiance our lov'd subjects' hearts.
What says brave Abner, gen'ral of our hosts ?”

“ That David is most brave, none here can doubt,”
Said noble Abner ; “ and as wise as brave,
And virtuous e'en as wise do I pronounce
The valiant youth, who merits well my praise.
Wherein hath he transgress'd against my lord ?
Though by the lustre of his warlike feats
He wins all hearts where envy hath no seat,
Yet, my lov'd sovereign, doth he make no use
Improper of his popularity.
By innate valour spurr'd to matchless deeds,
He only pants the envied top to gain,
The highmost summit of eternal fame ;
Nor stoops his eagle soar, O king, so low
As royalty, which, in the sunny stairs
That lead to glory's temple 'mid the clouds,

Is but a half-way step : he nobly strives,
On piles of his lov'd country's slaughter'd foes,
Heap'd Sinai high, that eminence t' achieve
Where fair renown doth ever true desert,
Without distinction, with full honours crown.
Then for a moment canst thou think, my liege,
That David, who is not less wise than brave,
Would tarnish all the fame he hath acquir'd
In Elah's glen, and on Philistia's plains,
With the vile murder of his rightful prince?
Offend that God he most devoutly serves,
To grasp a glitt'ring tiar, dipp'd in blood,
That must, if worn, pluck infamy and shame
On his devoted head? No, good my lord.
Let not thy wrath against the youth arise;
He dares not injure thee! His virtuous soul
Scorns to be great by any wicked means!
Therefore, O king, thou hast no cause of dread
From David's martial fame and high exploits;
He is the surest safeguard of thy throne,
Flow'r of thy warriors, and fair Canaan's pride—"

He had proceeded, but a deaf'ning blast
Of trumpets and of cymbals, mix'd with shouts
Sonorous as the ocean when he lifts
His deep-ton'd voice to chide the passing storm,
All further parley stay'd; for David now
Was from the field return'd, and, with his troops,
Ent'ring the palace gates. In state he pass'd,

Triumphant state, through the resounding halls
To meet the king. His helm and waving plumes
Were redly ting'd with blood ; his batter'd mail
And crimson shield were deeply trench'd with scars,
Th' impressure visible of deadly war ;
Yet was his form the image of a god !
His manly beauty, like the early beam
Shot from the eyelids of the laughing sun
Across a fleet-wing'd storm, a lustre flung
O'er all the warlike figures as they pass'd
In pageant files along the lofty dome,
That form'd a moving picture of such tints
As nor fam'd Poussin, with his utmost art,
Nor Titian's pencil, yet could ever reach.
Before him Gaza's captive banners droop'd ;
On each side mov'd the harness'd chiefs who fought
Beneath his ensign ; while behind him mourn'd
A thousand captains, of high rank and fame
In war's achievements, their captivity :
And, as they onward march'd through the wide halls,
Where twilight shed her last faint-blushing ray,
Clad in the cast-off mantle of the sun,
Whose radiant skirts were gaily fring'd with gold,
The armed ranks, with gleaming lance and shield,
Emblazon'd banner, cuirass, helm, and plume,
Seem'd like a host of bright immortals, seen
By some wild minstrel's eye, who sits, enrapt
With fairy dreams, high on the heath-clad top

Of Mona's moonlight mountains, when the ghosts
Of legendary saints and heroes, fam'd
In other days and times, forgotten long,
Pass and repass before him in array
Of visionary pomp! while solemn airs
Of druid lyre enchanting warblings breathe
Around the osier'd mound, where sleeps beneath
The warrior on his battle-axe and shield.

The princess met her hero as he reach'd
The entrance to the martial hall of state;
Her arms around his gorget-harness'd neck
She threw, and wept right lovingly for joy.
So droops the night-blown lily of the vale
Upon the bosom of th' enamour'd winds.
The princess would have spoke; but joy, to see
Her chieftain from the field of fight return'd
Triumphant and unwounded (for wild fame
Had told her 'twas a vict'ry dearly won)
So stopp'd the magic music of her voice,
That she was silent; but that silence spoke,
A thousand times more eloquent than words,
The feelings of the wife; while brightly shone
Love's pearly gem on the soft vermeil rose
That blended with the lily in her cheek,
More precious than the diamond; and her eye,
The radiant spirit of intelligence,
Told all her bosom felt. Meanwhile the king,
Forth issuing full of ire, abruptly clos'd

The convocation, and advanc'd to meet
Israel's prime chief, who thus, low-bowing, spake :—

“ For ever live, O light of Jacob's race!—
The God of battle, glorious Lord of hosts,
Again hath giv'n thee vict'ry o'er thy foes !
Upon the plains of Ascalon they spread
In proud contempt their ensigns, and defied
The armies of my king. We fought, and won
The banner'd field, yet not by our own might,
But through the pow'r of Him who reigns above.
Dread was the onslaught, and our fainting troops
Were e'en about to fly the bloody plain,
And show their backs t' th' foe, when JAH himself,
Who on the azure firmament doth ride,
My trust, my rock, my everlasting tow'r,
To triumph o'er the heathen's gods came down,
Who fought amid their ranks.—For battle arm'd,
And mail'd in might, He to my rescue came ;
The heav'n's tall pillars bow'd their massy heads
As He descended, while His glory fill'd
The wide-stretch'd skies, dazzling the fainting sun.
From Teman came th' Almighty ! Paran's hill
Dissolv'd as snow before His awful pomp !
The everlasting mountains stoop'd their heads,
And pour'd their melted rocks in torrents down !
Eternal darkness stood beneath His feet !
Before Him mov'd the pestilence, behind
Death follow'd on his pale, gigantic steed ;

Whirlwinds and storms, and horses fierce of fire,
Were to His chariot of salvation yok'd !
Sun, moon, and stars, with silent dread stood still,
When they beheld the glitt'ring of His spear,
The deathful splendour of His arrows, tipped
With flames celestial, that hot lightnings shot,
Red hissing, through the elements disorb'd !
The deep, in terror, utter'd forth his voice
With frightful bellowings, and his mountain waves,
Lifted on high, then fled away with fear !
The curtains of His tent were midnight clouds,
Whose inner linings were of lightnings form'd,
Ten thousand suns outblazing ! Thick the smoke
That from His nostrils rose sublimely dark,
The star of day eclips'd ; and the red streams
Of quiv'ring flame, which issued from His mouth,
Roll'd upward, like a stellar orb on fire !
And His transmutable and ancient stores
Of hail, and iron frosts, and hoary snow,
Melted to rivers of tempestuous rain !
Upon a cherub's wings His chariot roll'd,
Whose living wheels were beings, heav'nly-form'd,
Of sapphire brightness and with eyes of fire,
From which went forth fierce sparkles and hot show'rs
Of burning arrows ; while beneath them roar'd
A host of pealing thunders, lightning-wing'd,
Sublimely horrible, that shook amain
The universe, and the deep-rooted hills

O'erturn'd with wild confusion ! Now the earth,
That reel'd with fear, His glowing axle touch'd !
The groaning world from pole to pole was rent,
With noise more dire than the volcano's voice
When tempests tear its burning entrails out !
The mountains split asunder ; and the depths
Of the great sea, that fled affrighted back,
Stood to the day reveal'd ; while at the blast
E'en of His breath, the yawning rocks display'd
The subterraneous and long-hidden caves,
Channels, and secret fountains of the deep,
Which through the riv'n foundations of the globe
Roar'd in tremendous torrents vast and loud,
With blazing floods of liquid sulphur mix'd,
And nether fires that dreaded earthquakes breathe !
Then from the clouds of darkness forthwith rush'd
A sea of purple flame, that scorch'd the host
Of the dismay'd Philistines, who now fled
Yelling, distraught ;—but ah, in vain their speed !
For after them He shot a fateful storm
Of fiery hail, and show'rs of arrows, wing'd
With His devouring vengeance and dire wrath !
Then the war-horses and their riders fell
Together on the plain ; down fell the lance,
Down fell the blood-red shield ; their men of might,
And all their warriors, faded quite away ;
Not one return'd, the dismal tale to tell
In Gath and Ascalon ; the few that 'scap'd,

To us for refuge fled ! Our foes destroy'd,
Up to His empyrëan skies arose
The glorious Godhead, the omnific One !
While songs of triumph from immortal hosts,
And shouts along the passage, spoke His pow'r ;
And this the burden of their palinode :—

““ Lift up your heads, ye pearly gates of heav'n ;
For, see, the King of glory re-ascends !
Ye everlasting doors, be ye lift up,
And let th' eternal Victor enter in !
Who is the King of glory, that ascends,
Sublimely walking on the whirlwind's wing ?
The Lord most strong, and Mighty is his name ;
Glorious in battle, dreadful in the war !
Lift up your heads, ye pearly gates of heav'n,
Ye everlasting doors, be ye lift up,
And let the King of glory enter in !
Who is the King of glory, that ascends,
Sublimely walking on the whirlwind's wing ?
The King of glory is the Lord of hosts,
Mighty in battle, dreadful in the war !””

Like lamps of fire, fell Saul's dark eyeballs glar'd
With envious rage and malice ; for the fiend
Again now took possession of his soul,
And urg'd him to despite. As the fierce winds
From th' Arctic pole, with icy-pearled wing,
Blow on the foamy waves of Finland's gulf,
And stir them to a fury, till the bark

Rides on their backs, as Alpine ridges high,
And sinks again, dash'd on the hidden rock;
So did Adrammelec the passions wake
Of the infuriate king, who thus exclaim'd:—

“ Audacious liar! frontless arrogance!
Dost thou presume to boast that God himself
Descended in his panoply divine
To fight beneath thy banners? Misproud boy!
Vain-glorious vaunter! thou wouldst magnify
Thy high desert in arms above the clouds!
Wouldst sit among the stars and rule the world.
O, blasphemy unmatch'd! Presumption's height!
Thrones are too low to be thy footstool now!
On conquest's eagle wings thou mount'st aloft,
Ranking thyself with gods; while cherubim
Become thy standard-bearers, and thy arms
The treble-bolted thunder of th' Omnific!
But this good lance thy lofty soar shall reach,
And thy proud godship level with the dust!”

Thus saying, the indignant monarch couch'd
His pointed jav'lin, and with hell-nerv'd arm
Hurl'd it at David's heart. His seraph-guard
Was present, and the weapon's murd'rous point,
With shield celestial, from it's destin'd aim
Turn'd instantly aside. The forceful steel
The palace walls pierc'd deep. The princess shriek'd,
And fainted on the bosom of her lord,
Who forth convey'd her from the banner'd hall.

The night was dark, a tempest rent the skies ;
But a more furious storm rag'd in the breast
Of the lymphated Saul ; for now he sent
Adriel the stern, with a ferocious band,
The royal minstrel's turrets to beset,
And slay him when at morning dawn he rose.
Michal beheld them at her palace gates,
And thus, with tears, to her lov'd David spoke :—

“ Ah, wo is me, my lord, my husband dear !
No bounds my father to his anger sets.
E'en now the vengeful prince of Issachar
With dragon guards our home encircled hath,
Waiting, by my ungracious sire's behests,
To murder thee ! O, let us fly, sweet love !
We'll haste from hence, tho' loud the tempest howls ;
Its wildest rage is merciful, far more
Than these fell night-assassins ! O, my lord,
The terrors of this storm are not so dread
As are the visages of yonder bands !
The thunderbolt, that splits the vaulted heav'ns,
Sounds not so horrid as the murd'rer's voice ;
Nor is the sheeted lightning half so dire
As the bright gleaming of the bravo's steel,
Lurking beneath night's sable cloke, to stab
The breast of unsuspecting innocence !
Far from thy cruel, thy ungrateful land,
This night we'll fly ; 'tis death to tarry here
But till the dawn. I heed me not the winds,

Nor thunder's voice, nor beating of the rain.
Poor, hapless aliens ! in some distant clime
We'll refuge seek where envy doth not dwell :
Or, if thy merits have created foes
In ev'ry region, we will find some cell,
Deep in the forest or lone wilderness,
Far from the haunt of false blood-thirsty man.
Thou with thy bow and spear the woods shalt roam ;
And when at night thou to our cave return'st,
Loaded with spoils thy archery hath won,
I'll dress our couch of leaves, and o'er it spread
A carpet gay of asphodil and nard,
Of roses wild, of pansies wash'd in dew,
And this fond bosom shall a pillow be,
Whereon thy head to rest. There, whilst with sighs
Thou wak'st the cavern echoes, in thy breast,
Wounded by stern calamity, I'll pour
The soothing balm of tenderness ; then sing
My noble warrior to repose, and watch
Till morning beams, from danger him to guard."

To whom, in tones soft as the voice of love,
The sworded chief, as Hector fond, replied :—
“ Alas, that must not be ! my spiteful stars
Deny me so much bliss ; my cruel fate
Bars me from thy sweet partnership in wo.
Thou art a princess born, rear'd in a court ;
Splendour and fair luxuriance wait thy nod,
While joys unnumber'd here eternal dwell.

Shall I then drag thee forth to stranger climes,
To cold and hunger, misery and want,
To seek of charity a resting-place,
A shelter from the terrors of the storm?
Could I behold my princess on the ground,
Her head unhous'd and pillow'd with a stone,
And round her hear the chilling night-winds howl,
All succour far away, and not commit
A deed of dreadful rashness on the wretch
Who could such worth and beauty plunge so deep
In mis'ry's rugged gulf? No, sweet my love,
Here we must part—though Heav'n alone can tell
The pain my heart now feels; yet part we must.
For, rather than thou shouldst partake the woes
That will attend my flight, I'd wait till morn,
And calmly bare my bosom to the swords
Of those who lie in wait to take my life."

" Since then we must be sunder'd, fly this hour;
Nor tarry till the lark her low-built nest
Forsakes to rouse the dawn, or sure thou diest.
But thy fell foes begird the palace gates;
To ope them were to let in instant death!
Come then, sweet prince, my damsels and myself
Will, from the lattic'd casement of yon tow'r
That overlooks the gardens, let thee down
With silken cords; so shalt thou safely 'scape
Those bloodhounds of the king that lie in wait
To take thy life, and to some city fly

Of refuge, till these storms be all o'erblown.
My father may, perchance, ere long relent,
And thou return again in triumph home.
Whate'er the pangs this heart from absence feels,
I'll bravely bear unshrinking, though it breaks
In the endurance. Nay, I will not weep :
A hero thou, and I thy loving wife,
A tear shall not our parting now disgrace.
But O, remember me when far away
Thou roam'st, an outcast exile from thy home ;
Remember me when first thou seest the dawn,
And when thou sink'st upon thy bed to rest.
And ah, amid the battle's bloody fray
Remember me, and check thy valour's fire ;
For, shouldst thou fall amid the din of arms,
I'd seek thy cold grave out, and, on the turf
That hides my warrior, broken-hearted die !
But, if some lovelier maid, when far from hence
Thou wander'st, tempt thee to her fond embrace,
Remember me, and think what now I feel,
As on thy breast I, trembling, sigh Farewell !”

Escap'd the bloodhound bands of Issachar,
In watch set round his gates ; escap'd the tow'rs
Of Gibeah, that so late loud with the shouts
And songs of conquest echoed, as he pass'd
In triumph through her streets ; an outcast now,
By tyranny of joy and honour stripp'd,
Our hero fled. All night th' unpitying storm

Beat hard upon his head ; wild o'er the waste
Howl'd the outrageous blast, and thwart his path,
Torn from their earth-bound roots, the oak and pine
With wreakful vengeance flung. Full in his face
The thunder's harbinger terrific blaz'd,
By demons at him cast ; but all in vain ;
For Abdiel, faithful to his youthly charge,
From the fell agency of earth and hell
Him happily preserv'd ; though on his heels
Danger, like Proteus, in a thousand shapes
Of death-wing'd terror trod. Slow rose the Morn,
With dripping tresses, and a languid eye
Brimming with tear-drops, as the weary chief
Enter'd the gates of Ramah, and the porch,
The hospitable porch, of Samuel reach'd.
Him David told of Saul's ingratitude,
And found a happy, but a short, repose ;
For thither soon the king sent armed bands
To slay the youth, though he had refuge now
On holy ground among the prophets gain'd ;
Yet, by the Spirit of their God inspir'd,
They disobey'd their sov'reign. He, enrag'd,
Came last himself the champion to destroy ;
But, ere he reach'd Naïoth's sacred soil,
The Spirit of the Lord fell too on him,
And, tearing off his royal robes of state,
He prophesied before the elder seer.
Then David quickly from the presence fled ;

And, as the sun's effulgent chariot roll'd
With glowing axle down the azure steep,
The far-seen turrets of proud Gibeah met,
From the green mountain's top, his eager gaze,
Bright glitt'ring to the golden orb of day.
The prospect spurr'd him onward to achieve
The distant plain whereon the city stood.
His feet the hills' low bases, circled round
With vineyards, mulb'ries, and pomegranates, reach'd,
When from afar the jocund mingled cry
Of hunters and of hounds assail'd his ears,
Waking the echoes of the woods and caves.
Now down the vale where Syrian roses blow,
And self-form'd bow'rs of honeysuckle spread
Their bloomy umbrage round their guardian oaks,
Advanc'd prince Jonathan, with all his train,
Returning from the chase: his iv'ry bow,
And quiver void of arrows, at his back
Hung idly, late the terror of the shades.
His slaves were loaded with the various spoils
His arch'ry on the moss-clad mountain heights,
In savage forest and in bosky dell,
Had nobly won. Now, in each other's arms,
The youthful princes for a while forgot
Past fears and sorrows, tasting nought but joy
Unmingled, unembitter'd.——

But, alas !

Short is the date of pleasure unalloy'd

In this sad vale of tears; for scarce had fall'n
Mutual congratulations from their lips,
Ere a precursor from the king appear'd,
Posting to Gibeah with intelligence
Of Saul's approach. Him princely Jonathan
Accosting, learnt that his imperious sire
Had Ramah left, and by the close of day
Would reach the palace there, with a long train
Of martial captains and heroic chiefs,
Amid his hall, with shields far-beaming hung,
To celebrate the banquet of the moon;
When David thus began:—

“ Thou know'st, lov'd friend,
I should not at the solemn supper fail
To sit with Saul and his war-cavaliers;
But let me fly, and hide in yonder woods,
While at the banquet thou the temper prove
Of Israel's monarch. Should he ask the cause
Why I am absent; say, my sire demands
My presence at an annual sacrifice
Held by our house at Bethlem. If the king
With thee wax wroth, O then be well assur'd
He dooms thy friend to banishment and death;
But if a smile his clouded brow lights up,
Then peace and happiness may yet be mine.”
To whom the son of Saul:—“ My brother dear,
When at the feast of the new moon in pomp
My father, 'mid his martial princes, sits

High on his throne of state, be certain thou
That I his disposition towards thee
Will not forget to try; be it or good
Or ill, I'll nought conceal from him I prize
Beyond e'en conquest, kingdoms, life, and fame!
But haste from hence, thou partner of my soul;
To Ezel's lone and unfrequented rock
Thy steps I'll guide; there thou, amid the shades
That stoop their green boughs o'er its neighb'ring stream,
Their image in the crystalline to kiss,
May'st out of danger's reach till dawn remain.
To-morrow by its rugged sides will I
Three arrows shoot: if to my page I say,
The darts are this side of thee; then come forth
And meet me, for there's peace: but if I cry,
Behold! the arrows are beyond thee, boy!
Then for thy life to distant regions speed,
Far, far beyond the king's vindictive rage."
The brothers onward to the lone rock hied,
As from th' horizon, purple with his beams,
The downward sun in flaming glory sunk,
And the tall grove no more its shadow stretch'd
Across the painted bosom of the vale;
Where now arriv'd they, with embraces kind,
Parted full mournfully: to his low couch
Of moss and wild flow'rs, by the wand'ring rill
That sooth'd him with its plaintive melody,
What time the nightingale her sonnet tun'd

To Venus' twinkling star, David retir'd ;
While, like a roe on Bether's lofty hills,
To the lunarian banquet sped the prince.

Now o'er the tow'rs of Gibeah Cynthia hung
Her horned crescent, which did silverly,
Consorted with grey ev'ning's beauteous star,
Dimple the pure cerulean of the west ;
When, far resounding through the city's streets,
Throng'd with gay multitudes, a sprightly blast
Of sweet-ton'd clarions and soft-warbling horns,
The infant moon's new demicirclet hail'd,^x
That like a gem on night's dark forehead beam'd,
And spoke the pompous entrance of the king,
With his assembled captains, to the feast
By seneschals serv'd up in royal hall,
With war-gear brightly gleaming, where the harp,
The dulcimer, and pleasant psaltry rung.

From his high throne, that blaz'd with gems and gold,
The sceptred Saul to Jonathan thus spake :—
“ Why to the royal banquet of the moon
Comes not this far-fam'd son of Jesse's line ?
His seat amid the warriors I have mark'd
Is empty ; where doth the neglectful lurk,
That he is not among th' assembled chiefs
And princes of our house, to grace the feast ? ”

To whom his son replied :—“ David, my lord,
When he return'd from Ramah, did entreat
That I would grant him leave forthwith to go

To Bethlem, where a yearly sacrifice
His family doth hold, at which they claim
His wonted presence ; therefore, good my lord,
His absence from th' imperial board forgive."

To him, with rage inflam'd, the king respake :—
" Perverse, rebellious dog ! do I not know
That thou hast chos'n this son of Pharez' line
To thy confusion, pertinacious fool ?
Send for th' aspiring reptile ! drag him here !—
By all my hopes, he dies this very night !
Thou, traitor to my blood, thou dost uphold
This David in his treason : nay, hast put
Into his hand a knife to stab thy sire,
That he the di'dem may securely steal,
And fill this regal seat ! Shame to thy hopes !
No son of mine art thou ; I do disclaim
Affinity with thy unprincely blood !
'Thou stain'st the early honours of our house
With infamy, and royalty's young beams
Chok'st with unnat'ral treason, as the storm
Throws its dark skirts across the rising sun,
And from his worshippers his glory blots,
That flames on the bright forehead of the morn.
Take the reward of rebels from the hand
Of majesty incens'd !" Thus saying, Saul
At Jonathan his pointed jav'lin flung ;
But he escap'd—so will'd the Pow'r supreme—
And, rising from the festive board in wrath,

By such outrageous insults deeply stung,
Quitted with high disdain the banquet hall.

Where Zephyr, with his odorif'rous wing,
Around the woodbine plays by Ezel's rock,
The royal minstrel, on the painted turf,
With vi'lets scatter'd, lies in slumber's arms.
Her yellow beam the rising morning flings
Across the skirts of the departing night,
Paling Aurora's sweetly-sparkling star.
The woodlark, near him nestled, springs aloft,
And chants her solo to the chorus loud
Of joyous minstrels on each bloomy spray.
Along its margin, by his drowsy side,
The pilgrim stream its wizard music sings :
And now the virgin dawn, in trim array,
Walks o'er the mist-rob'd tops o' th' eastern hills,
Shaking her purple wings, impearl'd with dew.
Zephyr before her dances, and the rose
To his soft rape her vermeil bosom yields.
Now to the balmy morn's enamour'd eye
The wanton shows the royal shepherd's breast,
As Zembla's snows so white ; she, blushing, sigh'd,
And would have stole a kiss, but from her wing
A dew-drop fell on the bold hero's cheek,
And woke him from his slumbers. Up he springs,
Praises his God for His protecting care,
And sidelong at the brook drinks limpid draughts,
Fearless of fate, which often lurks unseen

Amid the bowl of nectar ruby-bright,
That, sparkling, tempts th' unconscious victim's taste,
Beneath the treach'rous roofs of splendid state.

The sun, like merit in concealment, shot
His upward rays against the orient sky,
Hid, yet illuming; when young David saw
Prince Jonathan advancing to the rock.
His voice the signal unpropitious gave,
As from his battle-bow three darts he shot
Beyond the page who his artill'ry bore;
By which sad signs the son of Jesse knew
There was but one short step 'twixt him and death.
Emerg'd from his retreat, he, bowing, sunk
Heart-broken to the ground. With arms of love
The prince his friend uprais'd, then to his heart
In speechless agony he press'd him close.
Like Lygdian^y statues on a monument,
In silence sorrowful they sadly stood,
Unbroken, save by grief-fraught sighs and sobs:
Their mingling tears bedew'd each other's cheeks
In plenteous show'rs: the morning scarf'd her charms
With pity's veil, the martial chiefs to view
Who had so oft in fight the garland won,
Now quite subdued by anguish, and some drops
Of soft compassion on the heroes wept.
The Sun saw not their grief; in clouds he rose;
And the sweet woodland choristers were mute
As love upon a bridal virgin's tomb.

At length, despondently, thus David spoke :—
“ My prince, my friend, my brother, draw thy brand,
And slay me as I hang upon thy breast !
Since I must perish, let me fall by thee !
For O, why shouldst thou bring me to the king ? ”

“ Far be it from me,” said the noble prince,
“ To do so curst a deed. What, slay the friend
Whom tenderly I love, e’en as my soul ?
No, rather bid me strike my falchion here
To my own heart, and drain its current dry !
Stern is my father, and in fierce wrath storms
Like the outrageous ocean, when he casts
His smoking surge against the low’ring heav’ns.
His looks are like the mountain lion’s, when
He laps the mangled trav’ler’s oozing blood.
Then haste, my much-lov’d brother, haste from hence ;
Go thou in peace ; and may th’ Eternal’s wings
O’ershadow thee thy dreary exile through !
Then shall His spirit thy companion be,
And bring thee with augmented honours back.
A faithful few, whom oft thou ledst to fame,
Have sworn to share thy fate, and wait beneath
The waving shadow of yon lofty wood,
Arm’d all in proof, to join thee in thy flight.
Yet, ere we part, perchance to meet no more,
Swear by the love thou bear’st me, by the pangs
Of cruel separation, by thy hopes
Of peace and triumph o’er thy envious foes,

That thou, not only while he lives, wilt shew
To him that holds thee in his faithful arms
Such kindness as thou hop'st from God to thee ;
But also wilt protect and guard his race,
When in the narrow house he rests in peace,
And all thy enemies shall be cut off ;
For certes thou wilt o'er thy foes prevail,
And heav'n ere long to thee the crown shall give :
Then may thy better angel from it pluck
Each goading thorn that in its circle lurks,
And line it sweet with roses ! on thy brow
O may it rest right happily in peace,
Nor from thy progeny be ever torn,
Let whatsoc'er my unknown fate betide !
But swear, as God doth live, thou'lt ne'er forget
The friendship of thy faithful Jonathan."

" Forget thy friendship ? By these sighs, these tears
That fall upon thy bosom ; nay, to make
The oath of this fond covenant secure
And ever-binding, let th' eternal God,
If I forget thy tender love to me,
And not a thousand-fold repay it back
To thee and thine, long as this wo-fraught heart
Heaves with a spark of life, or being lasts,
Reward my falsehood with His direst curse,
And floods of indignation on me pour !"

" Then haste, my dearest friend," said Jonathan ;
" The morning wears apace, spies are abroad,

And emissaries from my father wait
To intercept thy flight. One more embrace,
And then farewell! and with thee farewell joy,
For in thy absence joy dwells not with me!
We both have, in the sacred name of God,
Sworn solemnly : between us and our race
For ever be th' eternal Lord of hosts!
Once more farewell ; once more this last adieu !”
They parted thrice, and thrice they met again.
At length they from each other's faithful arms,
Heart-bleeding, rush'd ; and, as invidious space
Distanc'd these truest friends that e'er were join'd
In gentle friendship's care-consoling bands,
The oft-reverted eye they fondly cast
Towards each other's swift-receding forms ;
Till David, in the shadow of the grove
Where he his swordsmen met, now to the sight,
Long-strain'd, of Jonathan completely lost,
Look'd back no more, but to Nob's city hied.
Still to the spot where David disappear'd
The blue-orb'd vision of his heav'n-like eye
Did Jonathan long point, with fixed gaze,
Like the astronomer when through his tube
He marks the progress of some new-found star,
Till tears bedimm'd his sight ; then turning sought,
Tristful, the palace of his tyrant sire.

So on the strand the anxious merchant stands
To view his vessel, lab'ring o'er the surge,

With all his treasure freighted, and her sails
Wind-bulg'd, and trimly tow'ring to the clouds.
Bound for a distant clime, before the breeze
She rides majestic on the foamy back
Of the up-lifting billows ; he, well-pleas'd,
Still on her gazes, till, where ocean blends
With the blue ether, she becomes a speck,
And, gently gliding downwards, disappears.

END OF BOOK VI.

THE ROYAL MINSTREL.

BOOK VII.

THE ARGUMENT.

David's arrival at the cave of Adullam—his morning song—his father's household join him—a dreadful storm—the prophet Gad, borne by the Spirit of God in a whirlwind, visits David, warns him to depart to the forest of Hareth, and foretells his future prosperity—David harangues his troops—the three chief worthies of his band arrive with pitchers of water, drawn from the well of Bethlehem, to obtain which they had broken through the host of the Philistines that lay before the city—he refuses to drink it, and pours it out on the rock an offering to God—Abiathar rushes forward, and informs David that Saul has barbarously murdered his father, the high-priest, and all his house, for befriending him in his flight from Gibeah—he endeavours to comfort him, and sends him with his bands to the forest of Hareth—the princess Michal privately leaves her father's court, and flies in search of David—a furious tempest overtakes them as they enter the forest of Hareth—a female stranger approaches, and offers to conduct the princess to the abode of her husband—she leads them to the gates of an enchanted palace, the residence of Rapha, an enormous giant—the guide discovers herself to be the witch of Endor—the page expires with fright, and the fainting princess is borne by the giant into his magic halls.

THE ROYAL MINSTREL.

BOOK VII.

TEN days had past since David and his band
From Gath had fled, where he protection sought
Soon as he left the city of the priests,
Who gave him hallow'd bread, and the dread brand
Of Anak's glory, which he to the god
Of war had dedicated, and hung up
Behind the sacred ephod ; for the chief
No refuge found at the Phenician court.
Discover'd that heroic youth to be,
Through Canaan and Philistia's land renown'd
For warlike acts, their champion's conqueror ;
He, fearing death, the madman's guise assum'd,
And fled the tow'rs of Achish with his troop.
'Twas night when, wearied with their toilsome march,
They reach'd the woodgirt cave of Adallam ;
There finding shelter, constant as the morn
Crimsons the orient sky, in garb succinct,
They issue forth through forest, brake, and dale ;

O'er rock and mountain climb, and from afar
With their keen arrows pierce the flighty hind,
The skipping chamois, and the fallow deer ;
Then, loaded with the spoil, return to share
The hunters' feast amid their jovial cave.
The rising sun now 'gainst its ragged rocks,
O'erhung with cypress, brightly shone, and woke
David the valiant on his leafy couch,
Where, nightly lull'd by subterraneous streams,
That fill'd the cavern with soft-murm'ring sounds,
The banish'd fugitive at last found rest.
Up rose the man of might, and, girding on
The pond'rous falchion that once grac'd the thigh
Of great Goliath, his sweet lyre attun'd ;
Then, seated at an aged cedar's root,
Which 'mid the rocks, on whose gigantic heads
The eaglet plum'd her wing and ey'd the sun,
Bow'd graceful to the morning wind's salute,
Did thus his warbled prosody begin :—

“ Awake my glory, and awake my harp,
To chant the beauties of the early dawn !
Ah ! can a wretched exile strike the strings,
Driv'n from his home, from those he held most dear,
By an unpitying foe ?—Yet stay thy tears ;
Kind Nature smiles upon thy banishment,
And greets thee with new charms. Sweet is the sound
Of the young breeze low-whisp'ring through the pines,
Kiss'd by the morn's blue mists, its voice so soft,

So musically plaintive seem the sighs
Of some departed friend still dearly lov'd :
But sprightlier sounds the dash of yonder flood,
As o'er its moss-grown rocks, with age quite grey,
It tumbles, chiming to the rosy morn ;
While on the lofty tor, with winnowing wing,
The eagle flutters in the sunbeam bright.
Along the mountain skips the gladsome hind,
By yon fair day-star's emanations cheer'd ;
Who with proud exultation darts his rays
Betwixt the skirts of those gold-border'd clouds,
And chases to their dens the beasts of prey.
Sweet is the bleating of the scatter'd flocks,
Blent with the lacteal kine's far-distant low ;
But sweeter sounds than all the virgin's song,
Accorded to her shepherd's rustic pipe,
In yon green bow'ret, dress'd in roses sweet,
That glitter with the tears of weeping Night.
No jealousies of state, no tyrant's frowns,
Keep those kind lovers from each other's arms.
Alas, how diff'rent is my ill-starr'd fate,
Sunder'd from her whom fond my heart adores !
See, yonder youth, with pleasure unalloy'd,
A blooming garland gathers to adorn
The auburn tresses of the blue-eyed fair ;
And posies culls, combin'd of ev'ry flow'r
That seems the emblem of the virgin's mind,
Her bosom to bedeck. I once, like him,

Ere a proud tyrant thrust me from my home,
And doom'd me to be banish'd, was most blest.
Ah, how those moments sweet, those hours of bliss,
Spent with my princess, rush upon my soul !
But O, on wings of ecstasy they fled,
As pass the radiant clouds of morn away,
No more to paint, with bright romantic scenes
And glowing imag'ry, my darken'd sky,
O'erspread with mischief-pregnant storms and gloom."

The plaintive tinkling of his silver strings
Had scarcely died upon the list'ning breeze,
When he beheld, slow-winding down the hills,
Whose distant tops were hid in light-blue mists,
An armed troop : now, turning to the mouth
Of his wild, dark-brow'd cell, aloud he calls
On those who kindly with him exile share,
To wake, and arm themselves for instant fight.
Hoarse through the cavern's hollow vaults resound
The echoes of his bold commanding voice.
They, at their leader's words up-springing, quit
Their moss-strew'd beds ; and, girding each his sword
Upon his puissant thigh, throng round their chief.
Soon he perceives they are no hostile foes
That now approach : his father's house it was,
The lineage of brave Hezron's noble blood.
They, in their burnish'd battle-gear yclad,
All ready for the field, resolv'd their brands
Beneath his gonf'lon bravely to unsheath,

And own no other leader. Jesse's sons,
His cause espousing, in their arms now press'd
Their heav'n-anointed brother: on his neck
The sire, with white locks floating to the breeze,
Fell, tearful; joy to see his best-belov'd,
Who, in the field and at the faithless court
Such dangers had escap'd, such far-spread fame
So nobly in his country's cause acquir'd,
All utt'rance chok'd: the trickling drops o'erspread
The blooming cheek of David, like the dews
That fall from amber clouds on Hermon's hill;
When thus Eliab did the silence break:—
“ Behold, my brother, hither have I led
The armed youth of all our father's line,
Who ready are, with fellowship most kind,
Thy banishment to share, and who, to shield
Thee from insulting foes, their blood would spill.
Vicissitude of fortune hast thou prov'd;
Glory and fame have been thy bright reward
For brav'ry nobly shown, greatly display'd,
In the salvation of thy native land.
When at the court in splendour thou didst shine,
Amid the regal princes and the chiefs
That swell the train of Saul, I sought thee not,
Nor left my humble roof with hopes to climb,
By thee, to rank, authority, or rule;
But at a distance stood, well pleas'd to view
Thy growing merit, like a lofty palm

Shooting its branches upward to the skies,
With blooming verdure crown'd, while bright the sun
Of honour, with its glory-darting beams,
Shone full upon thee : now that storms have ris'n,
And thy fair sky beclouded, now mischance,
In wild tempestuous fury, thee hath stripp'd
Of all exterior pomp and show of pow'r,
And thrust thee out to an unfeeling world
Naked and bare, an exile quite forlorn,
Behold me, a true brother and a friend,
With open arms thy fortunes to partake,
And e'en in all thy suff'rings bear a part !
Pride I repel with pride, contempt with scorn,
Nor heed the lofty frowns that greatness casts
On lowly merit in obscurity ;
I to the stubborn and the haughty wear
A neck of iron, to the stern am rough
As wintry tempests fast'ning on the oak ;
But, when my friend is in affliction plung'd,
My heart is tender as a lovelorn maid's,
And I could hang upon his neck and weep,
Like frightened infant on it's mother's breast."

" Thanks for thy love, my dearest brother, thanks !"
Embracing brave Eliab, David cried ;
" A pow'rful foe has thrust me out to dwell
In desert, cave, and forest ; but with you,
My kinsmen and my brethren great in arms,
Each one a hero, what have I to fear ?

For food we'll rob the lion of his prey ;
Her raven from the hungry vulture tear ;
Amid the cliffs storm the fierce eagle's nest ;
And on the heathen borders, side by side,
Oft with our brave swords gain a gallant spoil.
Beside yon cave an altar have I rais'd,
Where on my God at morn and eve I call ;
Nor will I be afraid what man can do ;
For, though the armgaunt tiger oft doth need
His daily prey, and snuff the air for food,
Yet those who seek the Lord with all their heart,
Shall not his blessing lack."

" True, my lov'd boy,"

Return'd the well-pleas'd sire ; " for, though the chiefs
Who seek thy life are fiercer than the wolves
That haunt at close of day the wattled folds,
And swifter than the eagles of the heav'ns,
Yet, whilst thou trust'st in Israel's God, who oft
Hath in the battle-field enshielded thee,
Though in the desert wild thy steps they seek,
And lie in wait like leopards 'mid the rocks,
He will protect thee, and exalt thy head
O'er all thy foes, and crown thee with His love."

While thus they drown'd in sweet discourse their care,
Clouds veil'd the laughing eye of rose-lipp'd Morn,
And from the lake th' enamour'd sunbeam snatch'd,
Where, on the sparkling wave, in gold it danc'd
T' th' wizard pipe of the soft-blowing winds.

The wild notes of the greenwood minstrelsy
Sounded no longer in the pensive shades ;
The lazy stream no more was heard to flow ;
The wanton breezes folded close their wings,
And on the lily, that so late they fann'd
With am'rous sighs, now gently sunk to sleep.
Nature stood mute, and a dread silence reign'd,
Dumbfounding all things, like the touch of death,
Save where the far-off thunder growl'd aloft,
And threat'nings mutter'd of a wreakful storm.
Soon o'er the distant hills was seen to move
A hurricano, wrapt in sleet and fire,
Whose fitful flash glar'd redly on the light,
And quite outstar'd the day. The tempest comes.
Louder and louder sounds the whirlwind's voice ;
It nighs the echoing cavern : lowly bow
The gust-torn pines their lofty heads to earth :
Tremendous rolls the thunder ; while huge rocks,
Split by the flame-rob'd bolt, are headlong hurl'd
Into the boiling lake, and in their fall
Outroar the crash of warring elements.
For safety to the cavern hie the bands,
Through whose dark vaults, with double hurly, rings
The dread artill'ry of the troubled skies.
But David stood alone, calm and serene ;
Nor shelter sought, nor fear'd the horrid strife.
Wrapt in the sacred mantle of bright faith,
Than stoutest harness more invuln'able,

Unshaken, as a tow'r that on its rock
Moveless abides the lashes of the surge,
He view'd the wrathful scene : for well he knew
It was the voice of his all-potent Sire.
Clouds, tenfold dark as midnight, through the air
Roll'd grandly awful ; from their bosoms stream'd
Rivers of liquid fire ! Now at the feet
Of the undaunted warrior they descend ;
Their inky womb, unclosing, to his sight
Displays a scene of majesty divine :
Its inner foldings were of burning flakes,
That shot forth lightning of unnumber'd hues,
And in the midst a sapphire seat appear'd,
Upheld by beings, clad in wings that glow'd
Dreadfully glorious, bright past all compare ;
Around it shone the Spirit of the High'st,
Effulgence with the Godhead cœtern !
Oft sent, as ancient sacred minstrels sing,
To bear on holy mission seers of old,
O'er land and sea, swift as a shooting star.
Now from the seat stepp'd forth the prophet Gad,
And to the chief with dignity began :—

“ Light of the house of Jesse—gallant youth !
Fav'rite of Heav'n, and Israel's destin'd king !
The Spirit of the Lord hath brought me here,
To bid thee haste from hence : this is no place
Of safety for thee. Up ! depart, my son,
For Judah's land ; these gloomy caverns quit ;

To Hareth's forest speed thee with thy bands.
Fear not fell Saul, he ne'er shall harm thee : round
Thy midnight couch, be it the green cold sod .
Or flinty rock, thy guard shall be a host
Of angels and of chariots, form'd in heav'n,
In number twice ten thousand, and more bright
Than those dread flames that blaz'd on Sinai's top :
Then, warrior, rest, fearless of foeman's spear.
Thou shalt ere long, my son, ascend on high ;
Shalt sit upon the throne, and captive lead
The heathen nations. . At thy feet shall bow
Edom and Möab ; Ammon's haughty chiefs,
And vile Philistia, in the dust shall wash
With tears their blood from off thy battle-blade.
Through thee shall all the nations of the earth
Eventu'llly be bless'd ; and from thy loins
Shall One be born whose kingdom ne'er will end."

So saying, he retir'd amid the skirts
Of the departing clouds, now sev'nfold dark ;
Then on the whirlwind's wing arose, and turn'd
Tow'rd Ramah's sacred hills. Long David stood,
In reverential awe and wonder lost,
While his swell'n heart, with thankful joy o'erfraught,
Bade the full eye its sweet oblation pour
Of grateful tears to the eternal God,
For His great loving-kindness ;—richer gift
Than red libations drawn from hecatombs
Of lambs and bullocks at the altar slain,

Than all the sparkling gems that ever deck'd
The oracle of kneeling devotee.

Eliab, issuing from the cavern, now
His meditation broke, and thus began:—

“ Why didst thou, O my brother, here abide
The beating of so pitiless a storm?
Yon cavern, though its deepest-rooted rocks
With fearful tremblings shook the solid earth,
Had giv'n thee kindly shelter from its rage.
The field of battle, where amid the slain
The war-horse dyes his thunder-clothed neck
In gushing blood; where Carnage on each hand
Her wreck of mangled carcasses piles up,
And laughs to hear the gory broad-sword ring
On the resounding cuirass and the shield;
To me seem'd infant pastime, when compar'd
With the loud terrors of this frightful storm!
Didst thou not pale with fear?”

David replied:—

“ No, brother; for my confidence in God
Gave me a fortitude above all fear.
As omnipresent as omnipotent
Jehovah is! His presence still I feel
Alike, when at the rosy-vested dawn
Glad Nature smiles, and all her bloomy charms
To th' enamour'd daystar's wanton eye unveils,
Hail'd by the sprightly chorus of the woods;
As at the midnight watch, when slumber steeps

In her oblivious dews the dreaming world,
And, on the raven plumes of darkness borne,
The lightning-winged spirit of the storm,
Grasping the thunderbolt, across the heav'ns
Rides wildly wroth, and makes th' uplifted deep
His sandy girdle break in spiteful rage,
And new domains with his broad wave usurp.
Th' Omnific's voice I hear in the soft sighs
Of summer's zephyr on the new-blown rose,
As in the deaf'ning tempest's loudest din,
Mix'd with the sea and thunder's full-mouth'd roar!
And where He is, there must be sure defence
To those whose hopes on Him alone rely:
But I must tell thee, in that wreakful strife
Of jarring elements, a prophet came
To warn me hence. We must depart this hour.
Call hither all of our lov'd father's house.——
But wherefore tarry thus those warmen bold
At Bethle'm's fount? I fear me they have fall'n
Amid the heathen hosts that are encamp'd
Beside the limpid rill; I fear their blood
The pool has stain'd; red on its margin lie
Their batter'd shields and gore-besprinkled brands;
And by them sleep the mighty; or ere this
They had return'd. But see, my bands approach!”
“Ye faithful sons of Pharez' ancient line,
Who have forsook your homes with me to share
The dangers and the woes of banishment,

Accept my thanks, 'tis all I have to give.
You love me—I can read it plainly now .
In ev'ry countenance—and would avenge
The inj'ries I've receiv'd from cruel Saul :
Those half-sheath'd blades proclaim the martial fire
That in your kindred bosoms bravely burns
To do your leader justice. Loving friends,
It is enough, be my defence the High'st ;
He will, ere long, my great avenger be,
And His strong arm make bare, to hurl the bolt
Of sure destruction on my enemies.
Train'd to the use of arms, your hearts now pant
To win fair glory's palm ; to foremost stand
In battle's marshall'd line ; to draw the bow,
Brandish the sword, couch the bright-gleaming lance,
And rush like youthful lions on the foe !
Well, forward then, companions dear in arms !
Warn'd to depart from hence for Hareth's woods
By God's own prophet, thitherward we'll march.
But think not in those shades obscure that I
Myself will idly throw on some green bank,
And listen to the brook that prattles by ;
Or bid the greenwood echoes mock my pipe,
Letting occasion slip ; while deep in rust
This right good weapon, won by valour, sleeps :
No ! we have fought together in the field,
And nobly fought, my brave compeers in arms ;
And, when to deeds of warfare duty calls,

Again I'll lead you forth to fight the foes
Of our lov'd country. Let us not forget
That, though we're hardly dealt with by our prince,
Canaan's fair land our native country is;
And, should the heathen dare her bourn invade,
We'll from our haunt rush on them, like the pard
Upon the infant gamb'ling o'er the lawn,
And scatter them as dust before the winds!
Kinsmen, I burn again to lead you on
To fields of strife, to vict'ry, and renown!
And when high Heav'n, subduing all my foes,
Shall bid me the imperial throne ascend,
My greatest pride will be to rank you high
In honour and command; for meet it is
That such desert in arms should be repaid
With glory splendid as its bravery."

Shouts of applause and martial clangours rose,
Thund'ring from rock to rock, around the youth,
When those three chieftains bold in view appear'd,
Whom David, o'er his worthies of renown,
Created captains; with gigantic strides
Adown the vale, in iron panoply
And brazen helms, by sable plumes o'erspread,
They mov'd, majestic, forward: each now seem'd
A Hercules in arms, while in their eyes
Defiance, flush'd with conquest, fiercely blaz'd.
On their broad shoulders each a pitcher bore,
Full of the water of fam'd Bethle'm's spring.

Shouts rent the air, and warlike music hail'd
Th' arrival of these valiants. At the feet
Of David they their blood-bought treasure laid,
The gloried trophies of achievement bold,
And thus their prince address'd :—" Behold, my lord,
The water which so ardently thou long'dst
Last night to taste, e'en that translucid wave,
Philistine-guarded, of fam'd Bethlem's fount.
In vain th' uncircumcised host oppos'd
Our gleaming brands hot smoking with their blood ;
Like sturdy lions in a flock of kids,
Or vultures 'mid a troop of flutt'ring doves,
We, side by side together firmly knit,
A gore-stain'd passage through the sunder'd files
Of Gath and Gaza's groaning warriors cut,
E'en unto Bethle'm's gate, and at its rill
These pitchers fill'd ; then, brandishing our gloves,
We through the frighted garrison return'd,
Who on each wing rush'd back in wild dismay,
Leaving a lane with bleeding corpses strew'd,
Thro' which we pass'd, and trod their prostrate chiefs
In triumph 'neath our feet ; then, unpursued,
Hither these pledges of our conquest bore."

" O, matchless victors !" cried glad Jesse's son
" Of all the valiant warmen of my band
Be ye the chief ; and at the banquet take
The highest seats of honour next your prince.
But God-forbid that I should ever taste

This sacred water, bought e'en with your blood !
You, at the peril of your lives, achiev'd
The heathen-guarded spring, and I account
Each drop dear as the streams that feed your hearts !
As such, I would not with it cool my lip,
Though like the hart upon the barren hills
My spirit fainted with excess of thirst.
Here on this rock, an altar to the Lord,
Will I now pour it out ; and, O my God !
Deign Thou this pure libation to accept—
The blood of that true courage which Thyself
Didst in these sons of hardiment inspire !”

So saying, on the rock with holy awe
The precious stream he pour'd ; at which the band
Enthusiastic shouts of loud acclaim
Up sent, their noble leader to the skies
Joyous applauding ; while the sounding vaults
Of Adullam return'd the hoarse-tongued roar.
With more than common brightness, from a cloud
The sun burst forth, and o'er the dark-grey rocks
His golden mantle cast ; unnumber'd flow'rs,
Of varied hue and richest fragrance, sprung
The altar round, and sweeten'd all the air ;—
An earnest giv'n that Heav'n the deed approv'd.

“ Now then, my friends, we'll to the greenwood bow'rs
Of Hareth's forest,” said the gallant chief.
“ You, my lov'd aged father must not roam
The wilderness, and savage shades with me : .

To bear, unhous'd, the pelting of the storm,
And all the fury of the winter's blast ;
To have no shelter but the fading bough,
That howling tempests strip of ev'ry leaf ;
To have no couch whereon thy weary head,
Loaded with cares and age, to rest in peace,
Save the cold cavern rocks : O, it would break
My bleeding heart, to see thee thus expos'd
To all the dangers and calamities
That on the wretched outlaw's fortune wait !
No, thou art old, and need'st the fostering hand
Of kindness to support thy feeble steps ;
I'll take thee to the hospitable tow'rs
Of royal Mizpeh. Möab's gentle king
Will give thee leave in peace beneath his roof
Securely to abide, till all these storms
Of bloody-minded men are past away ;
Till my glad eyes have their desire beheld
On all my foes ; till the eternal God,
Who, from these waters of affliction deep,
Where the wild floods o'erflow, my soul shall save,
And, as a wayworn stranger long forlorn,
Restore me to thy loving arms again.
Onward for Hareth's close-embow'ring shades,
My vet'ran band ! When from the royal tow'rs
Of Mizpeh he returns, your faithful chief,
Your brother in affliction and in arms,
And dearer still by blood, will meet you there."

Scarce had our hero ceas'd, when suddenly
A youth rush'd forward, with his garments rent,
And ashes on his head: his bloodshot eyes
Flam'd with revenge, that grief with all her tears
Could not put out, and his torn robes proclaim'd
His function to be priestly.

“Ha, what mean
These signs of woe?” said David to the youth;
“Tell me, Abiathar, what calamity
Betides our nation, or thy father's house?”

“Calamity, indeed, betides them both,”
Replied the priest; “O, I've no words wherein
To clothe the horrors of a tale so dread!
The tyrant Saul—accurs'd be all his race—
My sire hath murder'd! O, I see him now,
The sacred pontiff, welt'ring in his blood!
Loud in my ear the death-shrieks vibrate still
Of all our slaughter'd house! still, still I see
Our sacred city delug'd with the blood
Of its inhabitants! Nor age, nor sex,
The villain's sword hath spar'd! In mangled heaps,
Amid the desolated streets, now lie
The infant and the sire! Nor sprightly youth,
Nor hoary age, that claims from all respect,
Nor beauty, that would soothe a lion's rage,
Could 'scape th' accurs'd assassin's steely knife!
O internecion horrible to hear,
But still, alas, more horrible to view!

‘And why, alone of all my race, do I
Live to relate what chills my curdling blood,
And yet not turn to stone?’

As thus he spake,
A murmur round him, like the rustling wind
Cold blowing from the north athwart a grove,
Forerunner of the storm, rose roughly loud;
While to his sword each warrior put his hand,
And sigh’d hot vengeance! but the youth again
Proceeded with his tale:—

“ ’Twas yesternoon,
My prince, when all the priests of hapless Nob
Were sent for to appear before the king;
The royal mandate we obey’d, and found
Th’ infuriate tyrant seated on his throne,
Amid a sacred grove of lofty pine.
Thick as the constellations, round him stood
His mighty men and most renowned chiefs,
Clad in their war-array; when sternly he,
With scowling brow, my sire accosted thus:—
‘Hear me, thou child of old Ahitub’s blood:
Unworthy of the high vocation giv’n
To thy rebellious house; how is it, priest,
That thou against thy sov’reign hast conspir’d,
And with the son of Jesse made a league?
Thou gav’st his daring band of rebels bread,
Putt’st in his regicidal hand a sword,
That with it he thy rightful lord might stab;

Unblushing traitor ! then, for him of God
Inquiring at the sacred oracle,
Assur'dst him on his head should rest the crown,
And from his line the sceptre ne'er depart ;
Which to obtain, he now is ris'n in arms,
Has black rebellion's bannerol display'd,
As well thou know'st, and, hemm'd with warlike troops,
Thinks to seduce the tribes to quick revolt.'

“ To whom my sire, astonish'd, thus replied :—
' Who has, among thy servants, yet been found
So faithful and so brave as Jesse's son ?
He in thy armed hosts held princely rank,
And to thy blood by marriage is allied ;
But think not, O redoubted king, that I
For him at God's dread oracle inquir'd ;
I knew not but on messages of state
The youth by thee was sent, for so in sooth
He did inform me : then impute not blame
To me, nor to my father's sacred race.
Most loyal liegemen are we to thy crown,
Nor knew that David had the presence fled,
Or was against thy government in arms.'

“ ‘ Falsehood but ill becomes those priestly robes,
Return'd th' insensate Saul ; 'twill nought avail
To plead thy ign'rance to the deep designs
Of that aspiring shepherd. Thou shalt die !—
Yea, thou and all thy house ! Fall on, my guard,
And slay these rebel priests, who would support

The cause of treason, and who knew the flight
Of Jesse's son, yet kept it from me hid.'

"He ceas'd; but not a sword, officious, peep'd
From out its scabbard at the dread command,
Dumb horror struck the warriors motionless;
Not one his hand would stretch God's priests to slay.
Whereat the king, inflam'd with bitter wrath,
Cried, 'Have ye all with Pharez' line conspir'd
Your monarch to dethrone? Döeg, my groom,
The faithful witness of their treach'rous guilt,
Be thou their executioner, and kill
All who here now the linen ephod wear!'
The dark fell ruffian, with a ghastly grin,
Inimitable e'en by fiends of hell,
His steely blade forth drew, with which he hack'd
My shrieking kindred piecemeal, and around
The throne of Saul their mangled corpses strew'd.
He, with demoniac joy, laugh'd at their cries,
As on the horrid banquet his revenge
Glutted its savage appetite, and sat,
Besmear'd with sacred blood, amid the slain;
Like a huge lioness, when with her whelps
Her bleeding piles of ravin she divides,
While the wild mountains echo to her roar.
Insatiate monster! Still my tortur'd eyes
Behold his murd'rous knife sheath'd in the throat
Of my lov'd sire! He falls, and groaning dies!
There too my hapless brethren now lie stretch'd

Cold on the earth and stiff in clotted gore—
My kinsmen all—not one sad soul but me
The bloody scene escap'd! Yet, not content,
The vengeful and outrageous monster slew
E'en all our wives and children! O, our streets
Were delug'd with their blood! Break, stubborn heart!
I had a tender wife, whom dearer far
Than life I lov'd; three cherub-smiling babes;
The guiltless lambs—they too have yielded up
Their little throats to the fell murd'rer's blade!
Nor wife, nor child, have I; not one sweet boy
Is spar'd me to console my sad despair!
On their cold mother's bosom now they lie,
Steep'd in her blood: perhaps the prowling wolf,
Who through our dismal streets doth roam at large,
Pillows his ghastly head on their cold limbs,
And growls to hear the sobbing winds pass by,
As to the frightened moon with sighs they tell
Th' inhuman deed that calls for heav'n's red bolt
To blast the proud destroyer! Ah, my brain,
My burning brain, whirls round! O, friendly earth,
Thou common parent, to thy bosom take
Me, mis'erable, a wretch with wo distraught;
That 'neath thy cold green sod this bursting heart
May in unbroken peace for ever sleep!"

So saying, on the ground himself he threw,
In agonies expressless. Not an eye
But glisten'd with mild pity's pearly drop;

Not a fierce-visag'd soldier but now felt
A woman's weakness lab'ring in his breast;
Till, each the man resuming, rage burnt up
Compassion's tear:—each his war-tackle shook
With threat'nings of revenge. Their sadden'd chief
The piteous mourner rais'd, and thus, with words
Of soft condolence, his deep anguish sooth'd:—

“ O calm the sorrows of thy wounded heart ;
Assuage thy woes, and stay these floods of grief.
O, I, alas, have been the fatal cause
Of all thy mis’ries ; of th’ untimely end
Of all thy father’s house ! O, then with me
Continue ever ; and, when thou dost weep,
I’ll mingle my heart-sinking griefs with thine,
And give thee tear for tear. Be comforted ;
No one shall harm thee while I wear a sword.
He that pursues thy life would me destroy ;
But, under our protection, thou shalt be
In everlasting safety.”

In his arms

The chief Abiathar press'd ; then to his band
Gave him in charge till his return, and wav'd
His burnish'd spear, the signal for their march.
They, in close order, sped to Hareth's woods,
And with his parent he to Mizpeh's tow'rs.

Meanwhile the princess Michal spent her days
In pensive solitude, her nights in tears,
Mourning her absent lord. A thousand fears

Of what sad ills and dangers might befall
The banish'd warrior, round her lamp-watch'd couch
Kept nightly stand, and frighted sleep away.
Resolv'd at last his wayward fate to share,
She in disguise, unknown to all the court,
Her splendid palace quitted. Not a sigh
Escap'd her bosom, as she turn'd her back
On those proud turrets, where in regal pomp
Her fiend-like father reign'd, to wander far
From all the splendour of a home so gay,
To dwell in woods and caves, the haunt of wolves
And prowling lions, and those woes to share
That on a death-doom'd exile's fortune wait.
Love wing'd her steps, and hope her bosom swell'd.
O love, connubial love, thou art of bliss
The source, the sweetest antepast of heav'n ;
Balm of our cares, the joy of all our joys !

The lady's sole attendant was a page,
Lovely as Hylas, fair as Ganymede.
They many a toilsome league had wander'd on,
O'er hill and plain, and by the set of sun
Enter'd the dark-brown shades of Hareth's wood ;
Where Michal, princely fair, had heard her lord
For refuge, with his gallant vet'rans, lurk'd.
Soft on a cowslip-painted bank awhile,
Wayworn, the travellers sat ; a spreading palm
Their flow'r-embroider'd sofa canopied.
Sweet-scented was the ev'ning air, and mild

The pilgrim breezes blew ; but ah ! the sun
Set o'er the forest, rob'd in sable clouds,
And gave presagement that some tempest rude
Would on the dusky wings of night ascend,
And through the torn sky ride. The princess rose ;
She look'd around, and saw the dun obscure
Of ev'ning, mantling now the leafy sons
Of Hareth's forest wilds, that ages had
The warfare of the elements withstood.
Her lovely hair was wet with falling dew.
“ How many weary steps have I to tread,
Ere on thy bosom, wand'rer of the woods,
I rest again in peace ? ” she softly sigh'd,
Then onward, mournful, stray'd. Darkness involv'd
The lofty cedars, whose huge arms entwin'd
A grand arcade, deep-shaded, o'er them form'd,
Impervious to the star-beam. Chilly blew,
With mournful howl prelude of a storm,
The blust'ring night-wind ; and the groaning oak
Of its green pride with force unruly stripp'd :
While ever and anon the wolf was heard,
Betwixt the pauses of th' exhausted blast,
With hunger howling ; when the page began :—

“ O, would to heav'n, sweet daughter of the king,
We once more were within the palace gates
Of royal Gibeah ! O, how diff'rent this
To rooms of state, and halls with tap'stry hung ;
Where, 'stead of night-storms and the baying wolf,

The dulcet music of the thrilling harp,
Sweet tinkling to the war-song of the bards,
Soothes the fond ear of laughing revelry!
Sure you will never find in these dun shades
Your banish'd lord; while in the fruitless search
We run a thousand dangers. Lady fair,
Pray let us our way-harass'd steps retread,
And on the precincts of the forest seek
Some friendly hut to shelter us till morn.
How loud and fearful sounds the deep-mouth'd peal,
The lightning's flash pursuing! Here perhaps
Lurk fierce banditti and the mountain pard,
And bands of fell Philistine borderers,
To fall upon the poor night-wand'ring wretch."

"Out on thee," said the princess, "fearful elf!
Is this thy val'rous spirit, that at home
Vaunted how thou wouldst use thy little sword
In my defence, should foes or beasts of prey
Assail us in our weary pilgrimage?
And, now the sable wing of ev'ning broods
Upon these lonely shades, fear turns thee pale!
For shame, weak boy, thy sinking courage rouse,
Or find thee out some little mossy cell,
Where thou may'st lay thee down and sleep till morn;
While I will onward through the leafy waste,
Though the red bolt its giant cedars rift,
And lightnings singe the foliage, as they show
The couchant lion watching for his prey."

“ What, leave you, lady bright,” return’d the page,
“ In such a dismal labyrinth as this,
Where howls the darkling wolf, and bleakly blows
Th’ unruly tempest? Princess, you mistake
Your humble page; he fears not for himself,
But for his lovely mistress. To some grot
Would she repair, to shun the bitter blast,
And the wild peltings of a storm so rude—
She who has ever in a palace dwelt,
Attended by a thousand soft delights—
I would with pleasure all the livelong night
The entrance watch, to guard her from all harm.
But, if she will against the stormy gusts
Her bosom press, as the majestic swan
The swelling billow stems, I too will on,
And rather die—yes, by these tears I swear—
Than my lov’d royal mistress e’er desert!”

“ Thanks, kind Perida; but it grieves me much
To have expos’d thee to a night like this.
Yet cheer thee, boy, thou seest I do not flag,
Though long has been the way that we have pass’d,
O’er moorland, hill, and dale. O, that sweet heav’n
Would send some forester or mountaineer,
Bound homeward, to direct our pilgrim steps
Where my lov’d lord to find! How dark the night,
Save when at intervals the lightning glares,
And, through this boundless sea of wavy green
Hissing terrific, o’er the forest flings

A transient day, that dies in deeper gloom.
How sullenly the shiver'd cedars groan,
Their hundred giant arms toss'd up and down
By the outrageous blasts ! Alas, sweet boy,
I feel my courage sink, my spirits faint !
O, God of Israel, some kind angel send
To guide me through the storm to David's arms,
For I am sick at heart ! O, cruel sire,
Thou art the cause of all I now endure !
Ah, ruthless king, at this dark hour thou sitt'st
Gay in thy halls of state, amid the chiefs,
Reckless of my sad sorrows ! Laughter crowns
Thy sparkling goblet ; and around thy walls
The tempest, like the frensied maniac, lowers
His ruffian voice, sooth'd by the wizard strains
Of viol, bardish harp, and magic song.
But happier far would be to me the cave
That oft has hous'd th' hyæna or the bear,
With my lov'd warrior, than the bow'rs of spring,
Though dress'd in all the sweets of Sharon's vale,
Or Gibeah's golden-vaulted halls of state,
Unblest with him I love."

A purple sheet
Of vivid flame through the wide forest rush'd,
While bursts of thunder follow'd in its rear,
Loud as the dreadful whirlpool's deaf'ning voice
That roars along Lofoden's stormy coast,
And many a league at sea the sailor frights,

Ere he beholds the bleak Norwegian shores,
When by its light a female's form was seen
Crossing the colonnade of storm-bow'd pines;
While, as the glimpses of the lightning play'd
Around her russet mantle, she approach'd,
And thus the princess and her page address'd:—

“ Alas, what hapless fortune can have led
So sweet a pair, and unprotected too,
At such an hour, to these lone forest wilds?
If ye, indeed, are mortals, be assur'd
Dang'rous and dreary is the path ye tread;
The panther and the wolf now roam at large
Amid these dusky shades, and hunt their prey.
Hear ye not how the fell hyæna howls
O'er his fresh-bleeding victim, while the voice
Of the grim lion fills each fitful pause
Of the exhausted thunders with its roar,
That sounds than jarring elements more dread?
But, should ye e'en escape the rav'nous jaws
Of these voracious tenants of the waste,
Yet, lovely strangers, bands, more savage still,
Of fierce freebooters range these dismal woods;
And sad, alas, the fate of those they meet!
But if ye be, as truly ye appear,
Bright creatures of celestial mould, that play
Upon the thunder-cloud, and wing the storm,
Then will I kneel and worship.”

“ Courteous dame,
Mortals are we, and sad our hapless lot
To wander through a storm that in its rage
No mercy to benighted pilgrims shews,
Amid these savage, dark, and frightful wilds.
O, take us to some hospitable hut,
Till these rude tempests, wearied with their spite,
Sleep in the lap of morn; and we will bless
Thy goodness, and thy bounteous care requite.”

“ Name not to me, sweet lady bright, reward;
The joy to serve you ev’ry toil o’erpays.
A noble chief not far from hence resides,
Who will protective shelter you afford
From ev’ry danger. He, good, noble youth,
Has been himself hard treated by the world,
And feels for suff’ring innocence like your’s.
He for his country manfully has fought,
For which his grateful king has driv’n him out
From all he held most precious. You, perchance,
Oft of the champion’s far-spread fame have heard,
For David is the name that he doth bear.”

“ O God, I now shall my lov’d husband see;
Soon feel his warm embrace, and know no grief!
O, gentle guide, conduct me to the prince,
And thou shalt be to me as one from heav’n
Sent to my rescue. Let the storm rage on,
I feel no more its terrors; all is calm;

And happier days await thee. Soon shall break,
From these dark tempests which obscure thy morn
Of youthful vigour, the refulgent sun
Of gay prosperity; whose sparkling beams,
With undeclining lustre, bright shall shine
Around thy head, and light thee to a throne.
Then shall I, when thou gain'st the regal seat,
To thee stand next in majesty supreme.
But hear'st thou not the skylark's cheery note?
Ere yet the moon hath set he, from his nest
Upon the grassy ridge up-springing, sings
Amid the clouds, and wakes the vernal dawn.
See, too, the east a purple radiance yields,
As though the rosy morn her eyelid op'd
To call me from thy arms. I must away."

"And must we part so soon?" cried Jesse's son.
"Yet tell me, ere you go, of my lov'd wife,
My dearest princess; O, how does she bear
These tedious hours of absence and alarm?"

"E'en as the widow'd turtle 'mid her bow'r
Of close-concealing leaves: from day to day
She weeps for thy return to her embrace.—
But hark! the morning watch doth warn me hence;
And yet I know not how with thee to part.
A heavy gloom, presagement dark of wo,
Weighs down my spirits, and my eyelids fills
With brimming drops: thou, too, art chok'd with grief.
A damp chill dew hangs on my forehead here,

Cold as the kiss of death, A long, perchance
A last, farewell! Yet we shall meet above
In brighter regions, where our ancient sires
Drink immortality, and reign in bliss;
And where the fadeless flow'rs of friendship bloom
In full perfection, op'ning to the blaze
That beams from an effulgent Godhead's smiles!
Ah, then no tear our radiant eyes shall dim,
No storm-rais'd floods of sorrow round us roll!"

The moon, low-glimm'ring o'er the mountain's brow,
Her last faint ray cast mournful on these friends;
Then, in a cloud wrapping her silver horns,
In darkness set, unwilling to behold
The last embraces of the downcast chiefs.
The morning star arose, but rose in tears
That dimm'd its golden beams; the pitying winds
Through the dark tresses of departing night
Sobb'd wailful; and the plaintive Philomel
On her accustom'd spray her sad song sung
Most lamentably sweet. O, gentle bird,
Thy sorrow-tuned notes awhile forbear;
Thou mourn'st the absence of thy murder'd mate;
And on the warriors' ears thy music falls
Like tristful strains, that on the wild breeze float
Through the still abbey's aisles, by pilgrim heard
When round a dear-lov'd sister's closing tomb
The vestal virgins chant a solemn dirge.
And now, ill-omen'd bird, the night rav'n wakes,

With frightful screams, the echoes of the rocks.
The dawn appears, slow rising in the east;
Her eye is red with weeping. Hapless friends,
Ye now must part, ah, never more to meet!
Death on the mountain of the slain doth sit,
And claims his victim! High on Gilboa's top
Demons of war in clouds and darkness stand,
Whetting their blood-dyed blades! Grim slaughter's fiend
Already with ensanguin'd steel hath dug
Upon the highland wilds thy early grave!
The regal minstrel, at the morning's dawn,
And when the ev'ning shadows dim the vale,
Shall seek thee in the wonted hall or bow'r;
But ah in vain!—thou shalt no more be found!
Soon shall he o'er thy pyre be heard to sigh,
As he with garlands decks the smoking pile,
'Peace to the warrior's ashes, who to save
His bleeding country dies!'—Long did they hang
In speechless sorrow on each other's necks:
A sad forebodement seem'd to tell them both
They ne'er should meet again. Excess of grief
All utterance chok'd; their tears in torrents fell,
And, mingling as they fell, bedew'd the flow'rs,
Whose brimming bosoms, when bright Phœbus rose,
Gave to his orient ray the crystal drops.
Translated to the skies, the brightest tints
They of the party-colour'd rainbow form'd;
Which Heav'n, whene'er she weeps, in token wears

Of her commiseration for the youths ;
While the kind sun, with his indulgent beam,
Their lucid tincture annually repaints.
Keen agony the chieftains' souls transpierce ;
Their falt'ring, ~~lag~~'ring, arms at length untwine,
And their last looks expressless suff'rings speak :
Weeping they part, and, parting, meet no more !

Meanwhile fair Michal, from long swoon awoke,
Her dove-like eyes, clear as the morning's, op'd ;
Yet, fearful still they should behold the witch,
A hasty glance she cast around the dome.
No witch was there—no form to raise a fear.
Beside her couch a train of virgins stood,
Fair as th' Orëades ; while their blue eyes
To all her wishes prompt obedience spoke.
Amid the magic hall, of vast extent,
A banquet was prepar'd ; profusion heap'd
The sumptuous board, delicious viands smok'd
In dishes wrought with gold and precious stones :
The globe, from Indus to the poles, was search'd
For sweets to furnish out the grand repast.
The richest wines of Canaan and Falerne,
Of Greece and Crète, in crystal goblets smil'd.
In massy vases, deck'd with sparkling gems,
Flow'rets of Eden bloom'd, and spicy gums
Richly perfum'd the odoriferous air :
Music too breath'd her mellowest strains of love,
Lascivious love, that in the mind instill'd

Delicious poison, and the soul inflam'd
With wild and fierce desires ! 'Twas witchcraft all !
Not airs so pow'rful breath'd Timotheus' lyre,
When at the feast for Persia's conquest sat,
In sumptuous splendour, Ammon's god-like son !
Not proud Belshazzar's high regale could match,
In vast magnificence, this splendid scene !
The portal of th' enchanted hall flew ope ;
Aad Rapha, strongest of the giant race,
Equal with huge Enceladus in arms,
Enter'd, sublimely grand ! with sun-like rays
Glitter'd his war-apparel ; and the glare
Of his bright-furbish'd falchion, set with gems,
Shot, like Orion's dog, through the dark night,
Beams wing'd with death ; his lofty raven plumes
Wav'd o'er his steely helmet, like a pine
Mov'd by the night-blast on a moonlight rock.
A troop of youths, as Hyacinthus fair,
Follow'd with graceful step, on him to wait,
And tend the dazzling banquet. He approach'd
The fear-struck princess, and, with looks of love
Fierce as lights up the lion's glaring eye,
When on the Libyan sands he woos his mate
With roarings hideous, press'd her now to share
The dainties of the table. On her knees
She fell before him ; tears forbade her tongue
To speak her grief ; yet they the orator
More eloquently play'd than language far,

Though in the diction of an angel dress'd.
But ah, the brilliant orbs from whence they fell
All they alleg'd in her behalf undid !
For he beheld the lustre of her eyes
Shine doubly radiant through their falling drops,
As sunbeams in the rainbow-forming show'r.
He saw, and breath'd hot sighs of lawless love ;
She bent beneath the hateful gust, and wept
In trembling silence. So the vernal flow'rs
That bloom'd erewhile the pride of Syrian fields,
When the sirocco, wing'd with pestilence,
Blusters o'er saltry plains and torrid realms,
Fade and expire beneath its scorching blast.

“See,” Rapha cried, “the treasures of the world
Together heap'd, amid this feastful hall,
To please thy sight, and gratify thy taste.
Within these tow'rs all pleasures, all delights
The heart has e'er conceiv'd, for ever dwell ;
Each hour that passes in her hand leads on
Some new-born joy, to gratify the sense
And fill the soul with never-dying fires !
For thee, sweet lady bright, have I prepar'd
These scenes of bliss, these gorgeous halls of state :
Here we'll together revel out the day,
And night shall lead us to love's joyous bed,
Dress'd, by the ever-blooming young desires,
With fadeless robes of felicity.”

He was about to raise her in his arms,

And with embrace polluted press her lips—
Resistance had been vain to force like his—
Toward the portal of the hall she flew ;
It yielded to her hopes, and she escap'd
Into a lab'rinth clewless, wild, and dark.
Rapha pursued, but still pursued in vain ;
A cloud, by heav'nly agency, of hue
More black than is the raven's sooty wing,
Enclos'd the princess, and her form conceal'd
From human view. On Israel's God she call'd,
To save her in that dread and trying hour,
Though her pale lip to sounds no utterance gave.
Long did she wander through withdrawing aisles,
Dark as the grave, where loud the blust'ring winds
Whistled the dismal notes of grim despair,
And fancied that she felt at ev'ry step
The hideous giant grasp her shrinking arm.
Now she beheld before her, moving slow,
A pale blue light, which as it mov'd still shone
With an increasing lustre, till full soon
It spread into a sheet of bick'ring flame,
And paus'd before a port of antique form
Lofty and ample were its folding doors,
That seem'd of silver, set with crimson stars :
The ardent hope they might to freedom lead
With courage fir'd the princess : she the key
Turn'd with a trembling hand ; the wards flew back
To frightful sounds, that chill'd her heart with dread.

Harsh grating on its iron hinges, burst
The valve asunder; thunders shook the dome:
Then her sear'd eyes the shrine of Moloc saw,
Where Rapha worshipp'd. 'Twas a horrid sight!
The demon's image in the centre stood,
High on a rock of glitt'ring adamant.
The vast colossal statue, whose broad face,
Of burnish'd brass, shone like the setting sun,
Held in its arms the ghastly skeleton
Of an ill-fated child, whom the red flames
Had to a cinder scorch'd, but not consum'd!
A cloud of magic incense rose at times
From an encrimson'd altar, strew'd with bones
Of human victims—captives in those wars
The giant had with num'rous nations rag'd—
And the terrific idol's form envelop'd,
That through the wavy smoke of burning gums
Glar'd brightly, like a flame-envelop'd tow'r!
Deep thunders growl'd along the vaulted roof!
Death-groans and piercing shrieks were also heard,
Which with unutterable terror fill'd
The horror-stricken princess! By the side
Of the grim image stood an altar, form'd
Of murder'd infants' skulls; on it was plac'd
A teraphim, the oracle of hell!
It was a first-born child's blood-clotted head,
By golden knife houndly split, and dipp'd
In magic salt, and oil from mummies drawn:

Beneath its tongue a golden plate was fix'd,
On which the name of Moloc was inscrib'd!
Sev'n lamps, with naphtha of Avernus fed,
And tended by an eastern archimage,
Before it burn'd! Here, on the battle's eve,
The giant, in the proud attire of war,
Came darkling; and in thunder did receive
Oracular responses from the fiend!
It was a scene had made the stoutest heart
Shudder with dread; for sights unholy now,
And shadowy forms of those whose half-burnt limbs
And bones lay scatter'd o'er th' unhallow'd shrine,
Began to move to direful sounds of wo
Around the smoking altar!—Faint with fear,
The princess turns to quit the fane accurst;
But ah, alas, its iron doors are clos'd,
And egress all to mortal pow'r denied!
O, lady sweet, what must thy feelings be
At such a time, in such a horrid place,
Cut off from friends, from help, almost from hope!
Yet in that hour of trial brightly shone
Her courage, as the sun breaks from the storm;
While, prostrate on the ground, she thus puts up
To the most High her prayers—

* O, gracious God,*
Who art the Lord of lords, and King of kings,
To Thee I call, as from the depths of hell!
In mercy save me from the giant's pow'r,

And virtue at its utmost need protect !
 A daughter of the faithfull'st found on earth,
 A daughter of the seed of Jacob, who
 Victorious prov'd when he with Thee did strive,
 With tears and trembling calls Thee to her aid !
 Hemm'd in with death, and demons, and false gods,
 A victim here I kneel ; O, save me now,
 Eternal Lord of hosts ! O, Thou hast wrought
 Deliv'rances for those that on Thee call'd
 In tribulation's dark and trying hour ;
 And to th' astonish'd world oft-times hast prov'd
 That Thou alone art the Omnipotent !
 Vouchsafe, O God, in mercy now to hear
 My sighs and groans ; O send Thine angel down,
 And from the power of these blood-thirsty fiends
 Save me, O save me, righteous Lord of hosts !
 Display thy matchless might ! O triumph now
 In my salvation o'er these hellish gods,
 And tumble horrid Moloch to the ground ! ”

She scarce had ended, when asunder burst,
 With most terrific noise, the cracking dome ;
 And such a flood of flaming glory spread
 O'er all the place, that, with th' excess of light,
 She fainting sunk to earth : Michael appear'd
 Descending to her rescue with his train,
 Upon a sapphire cloud : Loud yell'd the fiends
 And grisly spectres as they fled amain ;
 Celestial lightnings round the altars blaz'd,

And soon th' infernal teraphim consum'd,
That groan'd in thunder horrible to hear !
An earthquake to their deep foundations shook
The riven walls : down, ringing, rattling, fell
Proud Moloc's brazen statue, which a bolt,
With torrid vengeance wing'd, to pieces split,
And strew'd its shiver'd limbs o'er all the ground !
The princely lady, on a heav'n-bright cloud,
A guard of seraphim, in pallopy
Invul'n'able, and sparkling as the sun,
At the archangel's bidding, gently bore
Into the middle regions of the air,
From thence descending, on a bank of flow'rs,
Beyond the gloomy forest's utmost bourn,
They laid her, in a golden slumber wrapt ;
From which by Phaltier, prince of Zebulun,
Who with a band, by order of the king,
Had many a weary league his daughter sought,
She was awoke ; and on a leafy car
Of branching cedar, myrtle green, and oak,
Entwin'd with blossoms gay and fragrant buds,
Of growth luxuriant, homeward gaily borne.
Strains jubilant and military shouts
Fill'd the emburden'd sky ; and, ere she reach'd
The palace turrets, troops of daimse came,
Forth issuing from the royal gates, to hail
With diapason sweet of vocal sounds,

And golden wires of stringed instruments,
Her glad return to Gibeah's sumptuous halls.

As when the dark-blue billows, whose high tops,
Like snow-tipt mountains, gleam with lines of foam,
To fierce wrath stir'd by the tempestuous winds,
Affright th' advent'ous mariner, whose bark,
On liquid ridges wildly rolling, hangs
O'er hideous gulfs immeasurably deep,
Where war th' insensate storms, so Saul's approach,
With all his flow'rs of mighty heroes arm'd,
Whose march was as the sound of torrents loud
When swell'd by wintry show'rs, to the dark cave
Where David lay conceal'd, his bosom fill'd
With doubt and dread alarm. In haste, now flew
The roamer of the desert, and his train,
To the stupendous den's interior vaults,
Where never came the rosy beam of morn,
But all was chilling gloom. Faint with the heat,
For now the sun unclouded fulgor shed,
From his dominion vertical, o'er all
Th' enlighten'd hemisphere, the cavern's mouth,
Whose yawning jaws prodigious space did yield,
Presented to the king a cool retreat.
Sleep-soothing streams, with softly-mutter'd wail,
That far within'd subterraneous rocks
In darksome solitude for ever flow'd,
Tempted his feet to enter. 'Twas a cave

Of vast extent, whose farthest bounds were lost
In everlasting night; whose shaggy roof,
On giant pillars form'd by nature's hand,
Incumbent, frown'd grim horror: while along
Its ample aisles, in grand battalia rang'd,
Whole legions might have pass'd, and squadrons met
Of fiery horse, with ensign, spear, and lance,
And room superfluous found for martial feats.

His plumed helmet doff'd, that did the deeds
Magnanimous of ancient Gideon show
Emblaz'd in gold, o'er a marmorean rock
The weary king his purple mantle threw,
On which his toil-worn limbs he, stretching, sought
In sleep a refuge from those gloomy cares
That agoniz'd his heart: the drowsy god
His pray'r regarded, and in slumber seal'd
The monarch's heavy eyelids. But without
The cavern's confines; on the greensward, stood
His officers and sun-beat army, rank'd
In loose array: some resting on their arms,
Some buckling their war-batter'd mail afresh;
Others in consult or deep council met,
With helmed groups the martial landscape fill'd;
'While scarce a silken-winged breeze, to move
Th' imperial gonfalon, now ventur'd forth,
That on the standard-bearer's shoulders droop'd.

Brave David, and Adino, chief among
His sworded captains, whose blood-crusted spear

Eight hundred in one deadly fight had laid
Cold on the battle-field, now from behind
A craggy rock stole to observe their foes :
So, where a crowd of lusty bulls at night
Couch on the green brow of some mountain height,
Two youthful tigers creep around their bed,
Eager on the gregarious herd to spring.
But what was David's wonder, when he saw
The royal warrior, in th' embrace of sleep,
Stretch'd on the moss-grown rock ! With eyes of fire,
That seem'd t' illumine the cold Cimmerian cave,
Adino cried ; " Behold, my lord, the foe
Who oft hath at thy breast the jav'lin hurl'd,
And driv'n thee out from home, and all its joys,
A rover of the woods and deserts wild !
Come, strike thy dagger to the tyrant's heart,
And rid the land of an ungrateful fiend !
He, like a bloodhound, still pursues thy flight,
True to the track as beagle to the fawn,
Unerring as the vulture when she eyes
The bleating kid upon the mountain rocks ;
Yet now, a helpless victim in the chains
Of leaden sleep, he at thy mercy lies !
Thy steely weapon's never-failing edge
Will quickly rob that serpent of his sting,
And open wide thy passage to a throne !
Haste then, and snatch the sceptre fortune's hand
Now to thee offers ; seize the golden prize

Ere the dark king awakes, and she withdraws
Her gift, too long withheld."

"No. Heav'n forbid
That I should do a deed so horrible
To this my prince!" the royal exile cried.
"Ne'er be it sung or said, by bard or seer,
That David basely slew his sleeping king,
The envied seat of sov'reignty to gain!
For, though the monarch seeks my life, by me
He shall not fall. Vengeance belongs to God!
Ne'er shall th' infernal fiend of regicide
With gore-stain'd hand set on these brows the crown!
Far sooner a poor shepherd let me be,
E'en all my days, than win a throne by blood!
Stern warrior, rest thee on thy rocky bed,
Secure as in proud Gibeah's guarded halls.
Sweet be thy sleep, and may illusive scenes
Of visionary bliss thy wild dreams fill,
For unmolested thy repose shall be!
Though to destroy me thou art, hither come,
Yet will I in thy slumbers thee protect,
As fondly as the parent tigress guards
Her new-born young from danger."

"Nay, my lord,"

Replied Adino fierce, "whence can proceed
Such strange egregious folly? What! preserve
Thine enemy, who, were he now to wake,
Would, like a bolt from heav'n, thy heart transfix,

And laugh with joy to see yon myrmidons
Bear home in triumph thy dissever'd limbs
On their death-pointed spears? Certes, O chief,
Thou wilt not spare a foul assassin, whom
God hath himself forsaken! Forward then;
While yet no eye observes thee, through this gloom,
Forthdraw thy blade, and thy fell foe cut off!"

Shammath the strong now forward came; he thus:—
"What, Saul the king! thy foeman, and asleep!
What means that idle weapon by thy side,
When it should grace thy bold aspiring hand,
Hot reeking with the savage tyrant's blood?
Dost thou the sleeping lion fear to strike,
When the reward, so just a deed to crown,
Will be a sparkling coronal, beset
With rays of glory, and enlin'd with pow'r?
Let him but wake, he all thy bones would grind,
And in thy life-stream wash his iron fangs!
What madness thus, O prince, to hesitate
On ruin's precipice: push down thy foe,
Or fall thyself; destruction yawns beneath!
Thus let me save thee by a single blow,
That yields thee life, dominion, thrones, and bliss!"

"Stay thy rash hand," cried David; "not for worlds
Would I become th' assassin of my prince.
Who dares to strike at him, by Israel's God,
Must first through me his bloody passage hew!
Yet will I prove my faith and loyalty,

By cutting off his regal mantle's skirt;
That, when he quits the cavern, he may see
I wanted not the pow'r, but lack'd the will,
A slumb'ring prince to slay." The exile drew
His keen blade, and right speedily cut off
The train of state, then with his prize retir'd.

Saul now, by sleep invigorated, rose,
His burganet put on, and to his thigh
Buckled afresh his Gaza-temper'd blade;
Then, at the lofty entrance of the cave,
To order call'd the harness'd enfilades.
They round their sov'reign's standard, at the sound
Of his rough voice, which echoed through the vaults
And hollows of the den, themselves arrang'd;
And, to the warlike strains that charm'd their march,
'Neath torrid skies, o'er deserts, sands, and wilds,
Pursuit now recommenc'd. So at the dawn
The hunter, eager for the chase, upsprings,
All joyous, from his couch; o'er hill and dale
The full-mouth'd pack he leads, whose voices, tun'd
In chorus to the horn's melodious peal,
With pleasing music gay the landscape cheers;
While o'er the distant heath, through brier and brake,
The deer, swift-footed, flies with trembling speed.

Forth, like a youthful lion from his lair,
Rush'd David through the chasm of the rocks,
And to the crowned warrior fearless call'd.

From the deep files the king look'd back, and saw,
His noble son, who thus, low-bowing, spake:—

“ Wherefore to evil counsel, O my lord,
Still dost thou give thine ear? Why hearken'st thou
To those who tell thee that thy life I seek?
Behold, thine eyes this day shall be the judge,
Shall see how Heav'n, within the precincts dark
Of this vast cave, did give thee to my pow'r,
Bound in the chains of sleep! Behold the proof
Of David's innocence! here is the skirt
Of thy imperial robe, which, as thou lay'st
Upon the rock in slumber's visions wrapt,
I with my sword cut off! Some that stood by
Urg'd me with this good blade to strike thy heart,
Thy ruthless heart, which for a wretch cast out
From home and all its joys no pity feels!
But I in sacred mercy did withhold
My armed hand, nor stretch'd it out to strike
Th' anointed of my God. Know then, and see,
That there is no transgression nor design
Of evil in my heart against thy throne;
Nor have I sinn'd in aught, that thou shouldst still,
Like the fell leopard, my sad soul pursue
Through storm-beat deserts, and o'er mountain wilds!
God, who the universe hath weigh'd in scales,
With compasses the azure infinite
Divided, and assign'd each golden star

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Its fix'd abode, or radiated path
Wherein to wander o'er the shining heav'ns,
Be now the judge betwixt thyself and me!
He shall avenge the wrongs that thou hast done
To injur'd David, but my guiltless hand
Shall ne'er the crowned strike. Ah, wherefore leaves
The king of men, the monarch of th' elect,
His tow'rs of state, his halls with war-shields hung,
With tap'stry deck'd and battle-furniture,
The glory of the land, surpassing far
E'en Adullam, the pride of Canaan's plains?
Ah, wherefore leaves the prince of men such pomp,
To chase a fly, the sport of ev'ry wind?
Ah, whom dost thou pursue? For what o'erclimb
The craggy rock, ascend the rugged steep,
And roam the desert? Will the king of beasts,
To gorge the putrid flesh of a dead dog,
The forest hunt; or stir the pismires' nest
To cram his rav'nous maw? Th' Eternal then,
Who keepeth Israel, and who on His watch
Nor sleeps nor slumbers, plead my injur'd cause!
He is my keeper, my exalted rock,
My cooling shade upon my better hand;
Nor shall the calid heat of noon's bright rays
Smite me by day, nor ev'ning's moonbeam strike
With moody frenzy my uncover'd head!"

Saul thus:—"Is this thy voice, my much-wrong'd son?
O noble heir to an immortal fame!

True valour's darling child ! how greatly thou
Hast triumph'd o'er thy foe, and found the way
To melt his very soul ! Most injur'd youth,
Thou merit'st not or death or banishment,
But honours great as thy renown and truth."

A flood of deep contrition stopp'd his speech ;
Humanity came o'er his iron heart,
Like the sweet sunbeam on a hill of ice
By Greenland's dreary coast, and melted it
To soft compassion. Plenteous tear-drops roll'd
Adown his care-worn cheek, as the bland dews
Of morning glitter on the dark-brow'd rock.
Awhile he stood, and wip'd the briny streams
From his full eye ; then thus his words renew'd :—

“ More righteous art thou far than I, my son,
Rewarding all the ill to thee I've done'
With unexampled love and loyalty.
For who that found a lion in his den,
Fast bound in slumber's chain, would by the name
Shake him till he awoke, casting aside
His idle weapon ? Therefore God, who dwells
Between the cherubim, reward thee good
For that which thou to me this day hast done !
I feel a prophet's soul within this breast,
That tells me thou the diadem shalt wear
When with my fathers I am laid at rest,
And that the throne shall to thy race descend :
Swear, therefore, by the living Lord of hosts,

That thou wilt not my progeny cut off
When I'm no more, nor from my ancient line
Root out my regal name." Then David thus :—

“ If such the will of Heav'n, that I should reign
When in the narrow house thou with thy sires
Shalt sleep in peace, I swear I will perform
All of me thou requir'st: so fare thee well!”

Waving his battle-gauntlet in the air,
The stately king tow'rd's Gibeah's turrets turn'd.
Long David gaz'd on Saul's tall gaveloc,
That high above his helmed warriors' plumes
Bright steel-gleams flash'd in Sol's descending ray,
Like Hesper's star o'er a dark forest ris'n;
While up the hill the mailed squadrons mov'd,
In order regular, to martial strains
Of pipes and clashing cymbals, whose last sounds
Died on his ear as down the winding vale
They slowly now descended: o'er the grove
Floats the last banner, and the rearward files,
Like the low-setting sun, their radiance lose,
Fast sinking to the dell: the last spear casts
A feeble gleam. And now nor band, nor arms,
Nor waving ensign, helm, nor plume is seen.
Tranquil to David's gaze the prospect smiles,
More tranquil by the war-storm pass'd away,
As on the cavern's giant-rocks he sits,
Where the young chamois bounds from crag to crag.
Around him rose hills clad in vines and flow'rs,

With here and there a broken precipice,
And marble slanting steep of beauteous tints,
Romantic and sublime, beneath his feet.
In wide expanse fam'd Asphar's dark-blue sea
Its empire stretch'd, whose lazy wave the winds
Can scarcely ruffle with their utmost rage;
But whose smooth surface gave not to his eye
Th' inverted landscape, nor the lovely hues
Of summer clouds with setting sunbeams gay,
That o'er the sapphire infinite now spread
Their warm and glowing blushes. Here was seen
The limpid Jordan with its sedges crown'd,
Its groves of palm and aromatic bow'rs,
Yielding its tribute to th' ungrateful deep,
That scarce an oar or whit'ning sail adorn'd.
There, on its western coast, the tow'rs appear'd
Of Hazon Tamer; while more distant rose,
On the broad shores, Eneglaim's loftier spires.
Fields of eternal green, with tufted groves,
Gregarious flocks and herds and shepherds' tents,
Thickly besprent, and deserts darkly brown,
Forests and rocks, and Seir's lofty hills
In the horizon mingling with the clouds,
Till distance into azure soften'd all,
Crowded the landscape, varied and immense.

“ Ah me,” sigh'd David, as he cast a glance
Where disappear'd the banner of the king,
“ Departed is the monarch of th' elect;

And though, because I lack'd revenge to strike
My weapon to his iron heart, some tears
His cheek bedew'd, yet has he parted hence
Without recalling me, exile forlorn,
To court or martial rank. Ah, ruthless prince!
He feels not for the pangs that I endure,
Banish'd from those whom more than life I love.
'Tis not the pleasures that a palace yields,
Its idle pageantry and glitt'ring pomp:
No, nor the lofty titles, nor the pow'r
That wait upon the fav'rites of a king,
And charm ambition's proud aspiring soul,
Could make me thus the torrent of the hills
Augment with tears, and all the winds out sigh:
No! 'tis the chords of sympathetic love
And friendship, e'en as seraphs' passions pure,
That bind me to thy court, unpitying king,
And draw these groans of anguish from my breast!
When will these storms of sorrow be o'erblown?
When shall I cease to wander thus forlorn,
A fugitive cast out from all most dear?
My spirit is o'erwhelm'd! And will the Lord
For ever cast me off? Hath he forgot
To be right gracious, as in ages past?
Shall I survive these sorrows? Shall I yet
See my desire upon my enemies?
Will He who took me from the wattled folds
My refuge be, and lift me up on high?

O, with thy sacred counsel guide me then,
And to eternal glory me receive !
For I have none in heav'n or earth but Thee
That can deliv'r ; and, shouldst Thou me exalt
Above my brethren to be Israel's king,
Let what I now endure teach me to feel
For all my suff'ring subjects : let me reign,
Not the blood-thirsty tyrant, fear'd, despis'd,
And execrated ; but the father lov'd,
The just protector of his people's rights !
Then shall these stormy clouds of grief, through which
Break partially the starbeams blest of hope,
Sweeten the radiance of prosperity ;
And glory, by the tempest past away,
More glorious far appear."

Thus David spake.——

But what soft strain of witch'ry floats along
On the dim-vestur'd ev'ning's dewy wing ?
Not the full organ through cathedral aisles,
Pealing the midnight hymn, so solemn sounds ;
Nor sighs so wildly sweet the July gale,
Wand'ring for music o'er th' Æolian strings
To soothe the spirit of departing day.
Not Memmon's wondrous harp such notes did breathe
When first the rays of Sol's ascending orb
Struck its enchanted wires !—O'er that dead lake,
Which rolls on once-proud pinnacle and tow'r
Its sullen waves, now by the rising moon

Half-visible, it swells more rich, more loud!—
No mortal music round yon dark rock sails;
Of angel vision 'tis the minstrelsy,
Bewitching all around:—'tis Abdiel's voice,
Chanting divine of God's unchanging love
To those who on His kind paternal care
Firmly rely through all the storms of life.
Cheer'd by the symphony of heav'nly lyre,
That faded like the dying cygnet's lay
Amid the clouds, as Abdiel upward soar'd
To the bright sparkling star of eve, that now
Shone o'er the western cliffs, David arose,
And, calling all his cuirassiers to arms,
The caves and forests of Elparan sought,
That dreary desert of Arabia's land.

END OF BOOK VIII.

THE ROYAL MINSTREL.

BOOK IX.

THE ARGUMENT.

Morning—Abigail, the wife of Nabal, walks forth with her favourite damsel—their discourse—a domestic informs his mistress that David has sent to request a present from Nabal, who refuses—Abigail, alarmed, commands him to prepare a quantity of provisions, which she resolves to carry to David herself—David sits on a rock, waiting the return of his messengers—they inform him of Nabal's harsh treatment—enraged, he sets forward with his band to destroy Nabal and all his household—they are met by Abigail—David is appeased, and returns to his cave—Nabal's feast—David, in love with Abigail, is unable to rest—fresh warriors arrive, who inform him that the king has compelled the princess Michal to wed Phaltier—David's dream—messengers from Abigail bring the tidings of Nabal's death—David espouses Abigail—the nuptial feast in the cavern—David's spies inform him that Saul is on his march to attack their haunt—he rises in wrath, and with Abishai seeks the foe—the angel Raphael descends from heaven, assumes the disguise of a shepherd, and conducts them to the tent of Saul—Abishai proposes to kill Saul, but is prevented by David—they take the king's spear and cruse, and escape to an adjacent hill, from whence David awakens him—their conversation—Saul returns to his palace, and seeks David no more.

THE ROYAL MINSTREL.

BOOK IX.

DEEP in a beauteous glen of Carmel fam'd,
Amid luxuriant groves where ever flow
Sleep-soothing streams, chiding the listless breeze ;
Where hum of lab'ring bees along the banks
Of primroses and fragrant-blowing thyme,
Join'd with the distant bleating of the flocks,
And all the varied music of the woods,
Lull with tranquillity the pilgrim's ear ;
Stands the palmetto-shaded domicile
Of Nabal the morose. 'Tis blushing morn,
That down the valley peeps, in mantle grey,
The night-blown flow'rs to tend, and sprinkle dews
On ev'ry op'ning bud and balmy herb.
Now to th' enamell'd lawns stern Nabal's flocks
Are by his shepherds driv'n ; in wattled cotes
They bleating stand, while num'rous shearers stoop
With clipping clang, and rob them of their robes
Of fleecy wool, white as the southern clouds :

Rocks, caverns, mountains, groves, and winding vales,
Re-echo with their sweetly-plaintive wail.

Forth walks with nymph-like step, to taste the air,
Fair Abigail, his spouse, who gently leans
Upon a damsel's arm, as to the groves
They onward move; and thus her tale begins:—

“ Hail to the morn that strews my path with flow'rs,
And bids the wanton zephyr fan my cheek!
Come, let us haste to yonder myrtle grove;
Its lofty shades and solitude inspire
The guiltless mind with thoughts of holy awe.
Hear, how the torrent-swell of yon cascade
Pours to the smiling dawn its melody;
While sweet the musical enchantment tun'd
To love awakes of woodland choristers.
The warbling birds their golden plumage spread,
Proud of its colours, to the rising sun,
Resplendent eye of Nature, whose blest beams
O'er all the laughing landscape glory cast;
And whom to view creation sings for joy,
Her fund of treasures op'ning to its gaze!
Hail! thou arcade of vine-encircled elms,
Beneath whose verdant roof the feather'd choirs
The live-long day their mellow descant pour,
Cheer'd by the breezes that from tree to tree
Stray, fearless of the scorching noontide ray:
Hail! ye green lawns, embalm'd with morning's tears,
O'er which the nibbling flocks, half lost in flow'rs,

Serenely wander; and blithe lambkins dance
To the bland music of yon shepherd's reed.
Ye venerable oaks and solemn woods,
That whisper to the softly-lisping gales;
Ye mossy seats and cells, that the wild fig
And honeysuckle beauteously embow'r,
Receive your fond admirer to your arms.
Come, ye blue vi'lets, wash'd in morning dew;
Ye lilies of the vale, and roses trim,
And blowing eglantine, your scents disclose,
Till zephyr faints with an excess of sweets.
And round this fav'rite bank, that cedars shade,
Come all ye painted minstrels of the groves,
And with your softest sonnets soothe my ear.
Ah, gentle Talmai, would to heav'n that now
By yon bewailing stream my ashes slept,
And those fond birds, amid the mantling shade,
Perch'd on my grave, their lays funerëal sung;
That thy kind hands around my grassy tomb
Were strewing these fresh op'ning buds of spring;
Then should I be at rest:"—thus Abigail.

To whom the virgin Talmai now replied:—
“ Ah, wherefore dost thou still in secret mourn,
Lady belov'd? Long have I mark'd those charms,
That far outvie the beauties of the court,
Beclouded with deep sorrow; but its cause
Remains unknown, nor can I guess its source.
Bless'd with an angel's form, by all admir'd

Or envièd, and with boundless wealth endow'd
Beyond the dreams of avarice ; while your lord,
Though churlish and morose, permits you still
In state and pomp a princess to excel ;
What then can raise these sighs ?”

“ Ah, silly maid,
Think'st thou that pomp, and show, and ornament,
Can yield substantial bliss ? No, Talmai, no.
I have a soul above those paltry things
That catch the gaping rabble's vulgar gaze.
To thee I will reveal the source of wo,
That leads me to these sympathetic shades
To vent my secret sighs :—Stern Nabal is
The fatal cause of all my hidden grief.
Lur'd by the vast possessions he enjoy'd,
My parents forc'd me, ere I yet had seen
My sixteenth year, to wed the brutish churl :
Then, Talmai, sorrow first my days o'ercast ;
For O, my soul had oft in fancy form'd
The man to be my husband :—'twas a man
Whom Heav'n had with its own blest Spirit fill'd,
And with a patriot's zeal divine inspir'd
To shine a hero in th' embattled field ;
To face his country's foes in danger's front,
When all who stood beside him pal'd with fear,
And sought in flight their safety :—One who strove
To match in fame those leaders of our tribes
Joshua and Gideon, Jephthah, Ammon's dread,

And Samson the athletic ; whose great deeds
Our seers have in immortal chronicles
Emblazon'd forth, of whom our minstrels still
Sing in their magic songs to harp and lyre !
The noble youth I destin'd for my lord
I would have urg'd, in gloried acts of war
And fair renown, his predecessors all
To have outshone, as blaze meridian suns
Superior to the dying taper's beam !
Beside him, as by Barak Deb'rah stood,
Amid the hottest scenes of bloody strife
I would have fought, and the heroic chief
To enterprises, yet unknown in song
Or ancient chronicle, have onward led,
Making this faithful breast for him a shield !
O, gentle maid, oft has my ardent soul
With joy turn'd wild when but in fancy I
Th' applauding shouts of his glad nation heard,
That hail'd him their deliv'rer ! Then in love
O I had form'd him with a soul so rare,
So exquisitely tun'd in unison
With my own feelings, that our lives had pass'd
Smoother than summer seas, and all our talk
Sweet as those strains the lyres of angels breathe
To list'ning saints in heav'n's immortal bow'rs !
With such a lord, though grim adversity
Had sunk him to the lowest depths of want,
Dungeons and straw love's magic smile would change

To beds of down, and palaces of state !
But Nabal, fatal contrast ! hath a soul
Morose, unfeeling, and a heart of flint,
From which love ne'er could strike a single spark
Of pure refin'd affection. Proud, austere,
To fond endearment lost, and all those charms
Of sympathetic softness which still form
The climax of our sex's loveliness,
And beauty make more beauteous ! Link'd, O maid,
To one so base, to crown whose character,
Av'rice, that vice of age, his vices crowns,
What doth it me avail, though Fortune pours
Her boundless treasures dazzling at my feet ?
How idle is the mockery of pomp
When hidden wretchedness assails the heart !
'Twould nought suffice, tho' all the charms combin'd
That ever yet our weaker sex adorn'd
Heav'n on my form should lavish, and on earth
A model of perfection set me up,
While join'd to such a brute, who, like the swine,
Would not forsake his sordid husks of gold
To gaze upon a cherub of the skies !"

Zebina enter'd now the green alcove,
And thus address'd his mistress :—" Lady fair,
I haste to tell thee that the outlaw'd chief,
Young David, from the wilderness hath sent
Ten messengers, with greetings to my lord :
' Peace be to thee, and peace be to thy house,

And to thy vast possessions,' said the men ;
' Thy shepherds, who were with us in the field,
Have ever found protection from our arms ;
And, as it is thy time of revelry,
Give of whate'er thy festive board doth yield
To David thy brave son, our princely chief.'
But ah ! thy lord, O lady fair, was wroth,
And treated ill the warriors, though they were
A wall unto us both by night and day,
And kept the bands of rovers from our flocks."

"Speed," cried th' affrighted Abigail, " and bid
My slaves two hundred wheaten loaves select,
With five fat sheep made ready for the feast ;
Of wine two bottles, and of parched corn
Five measures, with two hundred cakes of figs,
And clusters of sweet raisins : let them haste,
And saddle too my mule, for I will hence
And bear a present to th' illustrious prince,
Ere in his wrath he stains with guiltless blood
The dreadful edge of his victorious sword.
O, I have sat whole nights to hear the tale
Of his achievements in the battle-field,
Of his great wisdom, beauty, and the wrongs
He from the king hath borne, till in the east
The dawn has ris'n, and sent me to my couch !"

David sat musing on a rock, while all
His valiant bands lay scatter'd round the hill.
Some on the painted turf recumbent slept,

Others apart with martial exercise
The hours beguil'd ; some hurl'd the missile dart,
And some the arrow from the battle-bow
Lanch'd at the oft-pierc'd targe : the broad-sword some
'Gainst their opponents' shields rais'd bloodlessly,
Aping the conflict's fury ; many strove,
In slinging, running, and in wrestling games,
Each other to outvie ; when now return'd
Their chieftain's messengers, and thus began :—

“ O, noble leader, we to Nabal spake ;
But he, harsh and contemptuous, answered thus :
' Who is this David ? and who is the son
Of Jesse, that he sends to me for bread ?
I know him not, nor any of his race ;
But well I know that many servants now
Break from their masters, and the country roam
Like pirates of the forest ! Shall I then
My bread and water, and the flesh I've kill'd,
Wherewith the shearers of my flocks to feast,
Give to supply the bold obtruding wants
Of ruffian strangers ? Hence ! and tell your chief
Elsewhere his food to seek, nor trouble me,
For be assur'd I'll not his need supply.' ”

David arose ; rage from his blue eye gleam'd,
Bright as the lightning thwart the azure cope
Of the extended heav'ns, while thus he cried :—
“ Blow the shrill warpipe, bid the trumpet sound,
And ev'ry hero to his puissant thigh

His falchion brace !” Not one but heard the voice
Of loud command far echoing round the hill :
Upsprung the sleepy guards ; the rest forsook
Their various sports, and throng’d their chief about.
Loud was the clang of battle-instruments,
As each his gleaming sabre buckled on,
And snatch’d his moony shield. So, when the sun
With Cancer rides, the prim’ry queen of bees
From their ambrosial cells her colony
Leads forth to seek new homes ; around her crowd
Innum’rous legions, busied in the air,
That with unusual sounds of winged choirs,
Hailing their new-elected sov’reign, rings.
David, amid the marshall’d files, his brand,
Fierce as a fiery comet bursting forth
From a dark cloud, out of its scabbard drew,
And thus in wild wrath spake :—“ Ye foll’wers dear
Of my dark wayward fortune, now partake
With me revenge on Nabal the morose.
In vain have we his ample flocks and herds
Protected from the plund’ring mountaineers ;
He hath repaid our kindness with contempt
And obloquy most foul : may, therefore, Heav’n
My foes preserve, and rain on me its wrath,
If, when I reach fair Carmel’s fields, I spare,
By morning light, aught that to him belongs !
We’ll take the hoary sire by his white locks,
And with our weapons drain his shallow veins,

And dash their infants' heads against the stones!—
Draw forth your trusty blades, and forward march!”

At their great leader's bidding mov'd the ranks,
And from his eye, that shot revenge, now caught
Vindictive rage. So midnight lightnings set
The crackling woods on fire, whose wind-driv'n blaze
Spreads ruinous destruction, and far round
With ruddy gleams the dark horizon gilds.
So, when grim winter 'mid transalpine vales
Despotic reigns, a troop of midnight wolves
March from their mountain-coverts to attack
The undefended village; round the cot
They howl for entrance, from its new-made grave
The wretched corse root up, and on the dead
Amid the churchyard banquet, where pale ghosts
And phantoms fright the wand'ring moon with shrieks!

Not far had David march'd before appear'd
Fair Abigail, advancing with her train:
A trembling o'er her came, when she beheld
The mailed files descending from the hill;
Whose steely breastplates, helmets, banners, shields,
And serried sabres, as the noontide sun
Burst from a passing cloud, right dreadful flash'd:
Like the reflection, in the starlight deep,
Of a vast city on some sea-marge built,
When in a gen'ral conflagration wrapt!
She now drew nigh, and soon discern'd the chief;
Above the rest in grace and majesty

He mov'd preeminent, while his wild eye
Resentment fir'd : like a young lion fierce,
His prey bestriding 'mid a herd of bulls,
The princely warrior look'd as he advanc'd.
Belial, the barbason lascivious, stood
The wrathful wand'rer of the rocks beside.
Full well assur'd of conquest, he now stretch'd,
With joy and pride elate, his tow'ring crest
Above the constellations, and appear'd
Another Atlas, propping heav'n's blue vault.

As Abigail alighted from her mule,
And fell at David's feet, a passing wind
With musky wing aside the white veil flung,
Which hid in envy such transcendent charms
As had on Ida's mount the apple won
From Cynthia, loveliest of th' immortal three
Who claim'd the golden prize, could Priam's boy
Their lustre in that fabled hour have seen.
A glance from the fair suppliant's eye, as she
Full on the warrior gaz'd, like a bright beam
Of moonshine flung o'er the dark storm-fraught skirts
Of midnight clouds, cheering the trav'ler's heart,
Disarm'd the hero of his rage, and charm'd
The boist'rous tempest in his breast to peace.
An awe he felt while motionless he stood,
As though a glorious angel on him smil'd ;
For heav'n was in her face, and beauty sat
Enthron'd on her fair brow, commanding love.

A sigh, that like a balmy zephyr stole
Between the twin-born rosebuds of her lips,
Blew to a flame the latent sparks of love
Within the breast of David. Belial laugh'd,
And on the vision of his fancy drew
Scenes of luxuriant joy and sensual bliss
In strong imagination's vivid tints ;
While, as she spoke, on the rapt warrior's ear
Fell the bland music of a seraph's lyre
Attun'd to love, and mute attention won
From all the high-plum'd ranks, that silent stood
As the green forest, when sweet Philomel,
Minstrel of night, her varied canto pours,
And the winds hold their breath, lest they should stir
The drowsy foliage, silver'd by the moon ;
While echo labours to repeat her song,
But, failing, dies with envy. Abigail
Thus to the sworded chief submissive speaks : —
“ In mercy sheathe, O warrior of renown,
Thy dreadful brand, or else on me let loose
Thine indignation : may thy stormy wrath
Fall as the ocean sinks when winds expire,
And churlish Nabal's folly be forgot.
Compassion nobly doth become the brave ;
Then let the heav'n-like beams of mercy gild
Those garlands thou in bloody fields hast won,
And they shall be a crown celestial, set
For ever on thy brows. Drop the bright sword,

O prince among the mighty, nor distain
Its gleaming edge with blood of innocence :
So shall thy foes, who seek thee to destroy,
Be vanquish'd by thy never-failing arm,
And fly like chaff before the boist'rous gust.
The messengers who came to Carmel's dale
Thy handmaid saw not, or they had return'd
With presents meet for conq'rors to accept.
The off'rings which in haste my slaves have brought,
Let them be to these worthies, high in fame
And warlike acts, now giv'n, who on the steps
Of my all-gracious lord attend to mark
His proud exploits, and learn of him the road
To honour, virtue, glory, and renown.
Thou art their matchless leader, born to fight
The battles of our God ! Through all the coast
Highly art thou applauded, as the prime
Of Israel's princes in the acts of war ;
And in the chronicles of valour stands
Thy name, emblazon'd like the radiant sun,
Thy starry rivals all outshining far
In wonders militant ; and, though a foe
Dark and malign, and arm'd in dreadful pow'r,
Be ris'n to seek thee, to put out the light
Of Israel's glory ; and the brilliant star,
Sweet beaming, of deliv'rance through the storms
And clouds that darken Canaan's hemisphere,
Extinguish quite ; yet, by thy God preserv'd,

Shalt thou escape, and prophecies long rife
Through all the land right happily fulfil.
Yes ; to dominion wide and regal pow'r,
O'er all the tribes and heathen nations round,
Thou shalt be rais'd, when Saul in dust shall sleep.
Ah then, amid the splendours of a court,
Prince of the mighty, sometimes deign to think
On thy poor handmaid, who with rapture lists
To hear thy deeds magnanimous rehears'd,
And ever, in her orisons to heav'n,
Remembers the protector of her land !”

With smiles of hopeful joy, and eyes from whence
Love had fierce rage thrust out, and lovingly
At the belov'd unerring arrows shot,
David replied :—“ Th' eternal One be blest,
Mercy divine, that sent thee forth this day
To stay th' o'erwhelming torrent of my wrath,
That else had swallow'd, in its furious rage,
All who to Nabal's num'rous house belong.
Blest be thy counsel, which hath kept my hand
From shedding seas of blood ! Return in peace,
Sweet blushing rose of beauty, lovely flow'r,
Pluck'd by the iron hand of sullenness
To deck its cold rude bosom ! star of heav'n,
That sparkles with such lustre as becomes
The roofs of royalty ! What pity, then,
That clouds of dim obscurity should veil
A radiance so divine !”—

Here David paus'd.

Hard was the conflict fought within his breast
By love and duty ; while, with all his arts
The wily Belial urg'd him to detain
The wife of Nabal from her husband's arms.
Honour, and fear of Heav'n, at length prevail'd
O'er love's strong force ; then shone the hero forth
As thus he Abigail again address'd :—

“ Thou beauty's queen ! perfection's paragon !
Acceptable to me thy presents are ;
For who, that once those brilliant eyes had seen,
The richest gems outshining of the east,
Could from so fair a donor aught refuse ?
Thou sweetest flow'r of Carmel's vernal fields,
Back to thy native vales return in peace !
Thy voice I've listen'd to ; ah, who would not
To sounds so sweetly musical attend
From morn to eve, from eve to morn again ?
Forgetting ev'ry thing but its blest tones,
That take the soul by harmony divine,
And wrap it in a heav'n of pure delight !
Lady belov'd, adieu ! yet kindly think
Upon a wand'ring warrior of the woods
And dreary deserts, whom the cruel king
From home and joy has banish'd ; who no place
Of refuge hath but the rude mountain rocks,
No shelter from the midnight storm and blast
But the wild forest, and the lion's cave.”

Low bending, Abigail turn'd to her train ;
Yet, ere she parted, on the chieftain cast
A look of sweet compassion, while her eye
Things spoke unutt'able : ah, 'twas a look
Of admiration—pity blent with love,
Which modesty, with her celestial veil
Of heav'n-wrought blushes, strove in vain to hide :
For ah, the more her feelings to conceal
The fair one tried, the keener lustre shot,
As sunbeams break from morning's crimson clouds,
Her love-enkindling eyes, where the soft passions
Enshrin'd themselves in glory visible !

Nabal meanwhile prepar'd the sumptuous feast.
Th' agrestic hinds and shepherds drain the bowl,
Now seated at the board, that groans beneath
A rich profusion. At the head presides,
In state that mimics royalty itself,
The wine-enliven'd churl : loud is the shout
Of jocund revelry and vulgar mirth ;
While rustic song, and jest, and laugh prevail,
With clam'rous noise of herdsman and of maids,
Who to the rural pipe and tabor beat,
With nimble feet, the ground in mazy dance.
Adown the vale, far off, is heard the rout
Of these mad wassailers, and riot's voice
Disturbing eve in her nocturnal bow'r,
As Abigail the glen's steep woody sides,
With all her train, descends. Now at the gate

She from her mule alights, and passes on
Through these tumultuous scenes of festive mirth,
Unmark'd of Nabal, who th' o'erflowing bowl
With drunken folly crowns; and, high in glee,
Lets loose confusion 'mid his num'rous guests,
While, like th' unwieldy whale, his furious joy
Spreads uproar, tempest, and wild strife around.

Fair Abigail, with Talmai now retir'd,
Thus to her fav'rite damsel, sighing, spake:—
“ O, what a contrast 'twixt this Belial's son,
This lord of mine, and that brave warrior youth,
The pride of Israel, and the heathen's dread!
He seems the chief my virgin fancy form'd
To be the lord of all my fond desires.
O, were he mine, with what delight should I
His acts rehearse, and tire the live-long day
Recounting his magnanimous exploits!
Mine! hence for ever ye presumptuous thoughts,
Injurious to my honour! Still this soul,
Spite of my will, on his perfections dwells.
O, who can fether the fond passions down
To what the heart abhors? Didst, Talmai, mark
The hero's godlike form, in mail encas'd,
Amid his valiant worthies of renown,
Majestic as a lofty oak that tow'rs
'Bove the palmetto forest? Didst observe
His helmed brow, the iv'ry throne of grace?
His eyes, bright as the blue infinitude,

When by the sun's meridian beams illum'd?
And then his voice! O, 'twas more sweetly tun'd
Than harps of cherubim! Cease, foolish heart;
No more of this: ne'er shall forbidden sighs
Of lawless love, I swear, these lips pollute!
Ah me, it had been better e'en that I
In all his wrath th' insensate chief had met,
And in my breast received his deathful lance,
Than of his love-creating eyes have felt
The far more deadly shafts! I'll to my couch:
Kind angels, guard my pillow from ill thoughts;
And O, let not his image haunt my dreams!"

Our hero with outrageous passion burn'd;
Nor did the barbason forget to fan
With his lascivious breath the glowing flames.
Some days had pass'd, when, at the midnight watch,
To David's couch Adino came, the prime
Of all his martial worthies, and thus spake:—

"There are, O prince, to aid thy cause, arriv'd
A band of captains of the tribe of Gad,
With faces fierce as lions, and of feet
Swift as the roes upon the mountain heights:
All men of war, who battle-bow and shield,
Lance, gaveloc, and glave can handle well.
But they do bear such tidings as will kill
The joy, my lord, their sudden presence brings.
Know that the ruthless king of Canaan's land
Has from thy arms the princess Michal torn,

And giv'n her to th' embrace of Phaltier, who
At court is high in honour and command."

"What!" cried th' astonish'd chief, "my wedded wife
Torn from me, and unto a foeman giv'n!
Proud tyrant, fiend, thou now hast done thy worst!
Thou canst not harm me more. Saul, thou hast wreak'd
Thy utmost fury on me! Bind my limbs
To wheels of battle-cars driv'n adversely,
Till life's strong chords asunder crack; till, rent
This mangled form to pieces, all my veins,
Spouting with blood, bedew the thirsty soil!
Or, bound in chains, toss me into the den
Where hungry lions roar to grind my bones!
Or bury me alive in burning coals,
By sulphur fed! 'twere now as beds of down,
With roses scatter'd; for, with all thy rage,
Thou canst not, monster, make me feel a whit
Beyond the agonies I now endure.
I will arouse my bands: their leader's wrongs
Will fire them with a fury that shall stem
The roughest tide of opposition, swell'd
With streams of blood! Yes, with our swords we'll cut
A passage to my princess, though the king
And this vile Phaltier host on host lead on,
As multitudinous as ocean waves
Roll'd shoreward in succession by the storm!
Yet, vengeance, hold! for whom wouldst thou assume
The warrior's guise, and couch the blood-stain'd lance?

For a false-hearted fair one? For a wretch
Whom fondness could not bind, nor pity move
To bless a hapless exile's misery
With one kind visit; though her smiles had been,
As well she knew, to this desponding soul
Like beams of sunshine to a captive long
In dungeons of eternal darkness hid!
O, treach'rous Michal, thou hast yielded up
To a base ravisher thy heart, or Saul
Could not have forc'd thee to another's arms!
O, hadst thou with unchanging ardour lov'd
Thy faithful David, thou, long ere the hour
That doom'd thee to be made a second bride,
Hadst fled pollution and thy father's gates,
And shelter sought in these protecting arms;
The mountain den that spotted leopards haunt,
The sandy desert, and the forest wild,
Preferring to emblazon'd halls of state.
Here beauty bright would tenfold charms have worn,
When soothing a fond exil'd husband's woes,
And, nurs'd by virtue, daughter of the skies,
Love's own celestial roses fullest blown!
Away with these fond thoughts! All-gracious Heav'n,
Bid resignation calm my madd'ning brain,
Or plunge me down at once the giddy steep
Of wild insanity, where reason dies,
And frensy painful recollection kills!"

Long on his leafy couch the chieftain toss'd,

Irresolute, in passion's vortex whirl'd :
Like to a bark mounting the storm-bulg'd waves,
With rudder lost, with sails and tackle torn.
At length, when sleep had seal'd his eyelids down
By Belial's art, in vision he beheld
A vale before him, which with Eden's plains
For beauty might contend : flocks white as snow
Repos'd beneath the shade on beds of flow'rs,
Which border'd with the colours of the bow
A lake, that in its crystal mirror show'd
Th' inverted landscape, of such lively tints
As Angelo nor Raphael ever drew.
Forth issued from a grove fair Abigail,
Who now to David seem'd more beautiful
A thousand times than when his ravish'd eye
Beheld her first a suppliant at his feet.
Her zone was loose, her crisped tresses flow'd
Free on the winds, that sidelong stoop'd to kiss
Right lovingly the roses in her cheeks,
And with her breath perfume their air-plum'd wings.
Approaching the green margin of the pool,
She to, her golden lute a ditty sung,
Love-labour'd, and so sweetly magical,
As seraphs might with envy burn to hear,
Could envy find a seat in heav'nly breasts.
The thrilling rapture ran through David's soul,
And all was ecstasy ; when now appear'd
The venerable Jesse, who thus spake

To his delighted son :—“ Why lingers here
My David, deem'd the valiant, when the joys
Of love await him in yon beauty's arms ?
Thou burn'st to madness with desires and hopes,
Yet fear'st to seize the prize within thy reach !
Her breast with mutual ardour now responds
To all thy wishes : banish then thy fears,
And snatch her from a wretch, who like an ass
His head upon a golden treasure rests,
Regardless of its value. Be thou brave
If thou wouldst be most blest ; for certain 'tis
Such charms must only bravery reward.”

He vanish'd, and left David gazing still
On Abigail, the most divinely form'd
Of womankind that ever met his eye.
Now from her lily hand the lyre she flung,
And her light-flowing robes gave to the winds ;
The snowy vesture from her graceful limbs
Falls to the ground, and all her nameless charms
Stand to the day reveal'd : so Eve appear'd
To Adam's gaze when to the bridal bow'r
He led her first, in native majesty,
Beauty divine, and heav'n's own graces deck'd !
The blush of the young rose her cheek o'erspread
As she the blue mere's brink, with myrtle fring'd
And self-admiring flow'rs, approach'd to bathe,
And in its glassy surface saw a form
That gave her smile for smile, surpassing far

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Venus de Medici, perfection's type.
On the green bank, self-contemplating, she,
Conscious of all her charms, awhile stood fix'd ;
Then rush'd into the flood that, yielding, veil'd
Her matchless beauties in its amber wave.
In rage the hateful Nabal enter'd now ;
His eye was malice, ugliness his shape.
Like a grim pard, that in his armed fangs
Gripes the young fawn, the valley sporting round,
By her bright dripping tresses Nabal seiz'd
Th' affrighted Abigail, and to the strand
Dragg'd her by ruffian force ; where with his club
He mark'd her alabaster skin with blows,
Till down her lily limbs a sanguine tide
Flow'd copiously, and stain'd the weeping flow'rs.
Pity and boundless fury David fill'd,
Who in imagination forward sprung,
Seiz'd Nabal by the throat, and in his heart
Buried his keen-edg'd sword : the chief then sought
Th' unhappy fair one's mis'ry to assuage,
Till, with excess of bliss and grief, he woke.

Uprose th' impassion'd warrior, and his glove
Snatch'd from above his pillow ; while his voice
Roar'd like the storm-swoll'n torrent down a steep,
Through the dark hollows of the vaulted cave,
As thus he cried :—"Awake, ye vet'ran bands,
Your slumbers break, and arm around your chief !
To Carmel's flow'ry pastures we must march,

For hated Nabal shall no longer live !
Ere noon he dies ; and, ere the star of eve
Dimples the western azure, Abigail,
The injur'd Abigail, shall be my bride !”

They heard his voice, and from their beds upsprung ;
The clangour of their harness fill'd the vault
With sounds like distant thunder : with them rose
The grey-eyed morn. Scarce had the swordsmen on
Their war-gear brac'd, and muster'd on the plain,
Ere messengers arriv'd from Carmel's wale,
And thus to David spake :—“ My noble lord,
The lady Abigail by us doth send
Her greetings, and informs thee that her lord,
Stern Nabal, is no more : for, when he heard
That thou didst arm to slay him and his house,
Fear struck him torpid as the marble rock,
And he, ere many suns had pass'd, expir'd.”

“ Blest be th' eternal Majesty of Heav'n !”
Said David as his sword fell from his grasp ;
“ He hath my cause well pleaded, and this arm
Preserv'd from doing wrong ; on his own head
Vile Nabal's savage wickedness return'd,
And granted me the wishes of my soul.
To Carmel haste, ten of my noblest chiefs,
And bear ye to the lady Abigail
Words of condolence and the kindest love !
Tell her a passion, to such fondness grown
As never can its image find in words,

Dwells in my heart for her : say that I mourn
In grove and bow'r, like the poor widow'd dove ;
And, till she condescend these arms to bless,
No happiness or peace on earth can know.
Ye sons of valour, haste, and hither lead
The charming fair ; that, ere yon sun attains
The golden west, she may become my bride."

The fiend again beheld abortive made
His deep-laid schemes to stain with murder's dye
The hand of David : rage, and all the fires
Of fiercest hell, within his bosom burn'd
As he across the desert fled, accurst,
And cursing the most High. Now mov'd the hours
With limping step so tediously away,
That ev'ry moment seem'd a weary age
To the impatient David, till his eye
Beheld far off the idol of his soul
Descending, with her train of beauteous nymphs,
The mountain's steepy side : then forward flew
The joyous hero, as the roebuck fleet
Or skipping hart upon the spicy hills,
To meet his new-belov'd. He nighs her now :
She knows him by his glitt'ring burganet,
Whose plumes wave like the banners white of love ;
She knows him by the lustre of his face,
That like the morning shines. Now, from her mule
Alighted, she, amid her virgins fair,

Bows to the earth her bright angelic face ;
While through her veil the blushes sweetly glow,
Like young Aurora's when her beams are seen
Parting the jocund summer's silver mists.
Thus to the chief, while more melodious sounds
Her voice than doth the cithern's strings when tun'd
By skilful minstrel, Abigail begins :—

“ Behold, my lord, thine handmaid ; let me be
The humblest vassal in thy noble train,
So I may but thy godlike form behold,
And witness of thy arm the vast exploits,
That, like a thunderbolt from heav'n, doth strike
Thy stoutest foes with terror and dismay.
They to thy better genius still resign
The triumphs of the field, where thou dost ride
O'er all the prostrate heathen's gore-dyed necks,
In conquest's sun-bright car, while vict'ry crowns
Thy princely brow with her immortal wreaths.”

The royal minstrel in his arms uprais'd,
With looks of transport, the bewitching fair,
And, smiling, thus replied :—“ Belov'd, ador'd,
Since thou a wand'ring warrior's fate wilt share,
Mine be the bliss to greet thee this glad hour
With an enraptur'd husband's fond embrace.
My happy bride shalt thou this night be made :
The skies will on our genial nuptials rain
Their choicest blessings ; while love's purple wings

Our pillow canopying, the lion's den
Shall to a crystal palace bright transform,
And the wild desert change to 'Sharon's bow'rs.'

'Twas eventide; the eye of day was shut;
And the deep blushes of the golden west
Were fading into dim obscurity;
When David led the fair one to a grove
Of myrtle and of citron; her long train
Of sylph-like damsels follow'd, and a host
Of vet'ran war-chiefs the procession fill'd.
A painted bank, amid the whisp'ring shade,
Was the young lovers' throne, of softest moss
Damask'd with flow'rs, sweet as sprung up beneath
The feet of Paphia, when love's goddess first
Her happy isle, deep in the mid-sea, touch'd.
Their hands Abiathar join'd; the virgin train
The choicest blossoms, cull'd from summer's wreath,
Around them scatter'd, and with braided crowns
Of roses and acanthus deck'd their brows.
Nor were there wanting plaudits, shouts, or clang
Of warlike metal, with canorous strains,
Sounding the gen'ral joy. Now to the cave,
The warrior's haunt, whose yawning mouth deep woods
And shaggy cliffs o'erhung, the exile led
His angel bride, by the nocturnal star,
That on their heads her kindest influence shed;
While sweet her song of love the nightingale
Pour'd by the chatt'ring till, that paus'd to hear

Her serenade by wand'ring echo mock'd.
A sumptuous banquet stood prepar'd to cheer
The nuptial guests amid the hall of rocks :
Their table was a stone, by Nature's hand
Polish'd and hewn, in length and breadth immense,
Which in the lofty cavern's centre stood ;
Its ample surface was with all o'erspread
The seasons could produce. A smoking ox
The centre grac'd ; around him lay the limbs
(In silver chargers brought from Carmel's dale)
Of the fleet hart of Bether and the goat,
The sav'ry roebuck and the fallow deer,
The youthful bullock and the lusty ram,
The pygarg, with the chamois and its kid.
Of fish, all that the seas and sounding shoals
And rivers yield, and fowl of ev'ry kind,
With an excess the bridal feast supplied,
From the young dove to that most princely dish
The gorgeous peacock, who, with sapphire neck,
And train of em'erald, amethyst, and gold,
Besprinkled thick with ever-radiant stars,
O'er all the grand regalement shone supreme.
In polish'd salvers bright of brass were pil'd
Clusters of Eshcol's sweet succiduous grapes,
And lemons brought from Shrimron's sunny vale,
The redolent pistachio and wild fig,
Nutritious melons with their spicy juice,
The blushing mulb'ry and empurpled plum,

Pine-apples gold-emboss'd, and the rich pulp
Of dulcet calabash, the plantain's fruit,
And the pomegranate, with its crimson hues.
There cakes of raisins stood the table round,
Butter of kine, and bowls with milk of sheep.
Here the wild wood-bee's luscious honeycomb
Distilling nectar, while in goblets smil'd
The grape's pure blood, that cheers the hearts of men,
Care banishing, with the delicious tears
The sycamore doth weep, the palm-trees' sap,
The milk of cocoa, and the juice of dates,
With fragrant orange-dew, and cordial lymphs
From Syrian vales and Persia's distant land.
Down from the echo-yielding roof sublime,
Of dark-brow'd crags and glitt'ring spars commix'd,
Hung many a starry lamp, that far around
Their beamy lustre cast, and chas'd the gloom,
Robb'd of its ancient reign, t' th' utmost bounds
Of the resounding antre; round whose sides,
O'erhung with od'rous shrubs and balmy flow'rs,
Were tables, form'd of rocks, with viands crown'd;
Where spearmen bold and valiant cuirassiers,
Loud in their mirth, partook the mantling bowl,
And shar'd their leader's bliss. He in the midst,
By Abigail and all her damsels fair,
Sat with his thirty worthies, whose wide fame
And deeds heroic long were made the theme
Of legendary tale and minstrel's song.

The hollow vaults re-echo with the din
Of wine-cheer'd revelry and high regale ;
The lay of harper, and the mellow'd wires,
Are heard amid the mingled sounds of joy.
And now the heroes, with rich nectar warm'd,
Command the bard that best can strike the string
To chant the high exploits of their great chief.
The bard obeys ; enthusiastic love
And admiration of their god-like prince
Fill ev'ry bosom ; with one voice they shout
Their hoarse applause, and with one voice they cry,
“ David shall be our king ! Anointed chief,
Great prince of Israel, hail ! ” But scarce had ceas'd
The oft-repeated plaudit when appear'd
The helmed spies whom David forth had sent
To roam the coast, and bring intelligence
Of Saul's approach. Their looks the revellers
Struck silent as the rayless noon of night,
And the smile-dimpled cheek of mirth turn'd pale.
Their voices were expiring pleasure's knell
As thus they hastily their lord address'd :—
“ Arm, noble prince, and lead thy warmen forth
To speedy battle, or some safer hold
Of refuge seek from the fell king of men.
No longer list the tinkling of the harp,
But bid thy captains case in mail their limbs
To the shrill war-pipe and the trumpet's blast.
The Ziphites have the monarch of th' elect

Inform'd of this our haunt, and hitherward
He, with three thousand of his chosen troops,
Is in full march. At set of sun we saw
His banners issuing from the lofty gates
Of Jeshimon; and on the rocky heights
Of Hachilah, where ling'ring twilight shed
Her last empurpled gleams o'er the dark wheels
Of sable night's ascending car, beheld
His host of warriors' beamy spears and shields,
That, as they onward mov'd in fancy's eye,
A wintry forest seem'd with moonbeams tipp'd,
And set in motion by the groaning blast."

Deep gloom pervaded the festivity;
Mute was the minstrel's voice, and mute the harp,
While terror pal'd each damsel's beauteous cheek,
As all the dark-fac'd heroes rose at once
And donn'd their rattling battle-gear,—their greaves,
Their coats of steel, their corslets, brazen helmets,
Gauntlets, and iron beavers; then forth drew
Their brands coruscant, that far round the cave
A dreadful war-gleam flash'd, as on their shields
Of sev'n-times-folded brass, with wine inflam'd,
They thunder'd bold defiance to the king.

So when still ev'ning comes, and the faint rays
Of Phœbus, setting o'er the western hills,
Lengthen the shadows of the stately grove,
With love's soft canticles the forest rings,
Through which the blushes of departing day

Illumination dart, of richer dyes
Than in the gothic fane's escutcheon'd aisle
The saint-encypher'd glass on pilgrim sheds
Before the sacred shrine; while hill and dale,
That lowing kine and bleating flocks o'erspread,
With dews refresh'd, pleas'd Nature's song repeat.
But soon the tempest, thunder-fraught, enshrouds
The flaming radiance of the golden sky,
And on the forest falls in all its rage:
Hush'd is the woodland harmony, and fled
The frightened warblers from the deep-mouth'd storm
That, through the green alcoves fierce-raving, tears
The flow'r-enwov'n foliage, and love's bow'rs
Scathes with th' exploding bolt, whose fury rends
Th' embowell'd air, while terror reigns around.

“The king then comes to tear me from thy arms,”
Said David to his bride, as he uprose
In anger from his seat; “why, let him come:
Ne'er shall the fear of what his rage can do
Fright me from the blest heav'n of thy embrace!
Let the fell tyrant with his warband haste,
And steep in streams of blood our bridal bed,
So I expire upon thy panting breast,
And on those lips of love my soul breathe out.
The pangs of dying will be felt no more
Than sleep's first influence on an infant, lull'd
In bed of roses by its mother's voice!”

“And would my lord, my life, my only love

His Abigail with such a sight destroy?
Ah, could these eyes my noble hero view
Drench'd in his blood, expiring in my arms,
And life endure? O, could I see thee fall
A bleeding victim at the tyrant's feet,
And not with agony expressless die?
Haste then, my noble warrior, hence this hour;
Thy darkling flight I joyfully will share.
The midnight storm with thee no terrors hath,
Nor gloomy desert, though the lion cross
My path with hunger howling! By thy side
Amid the battle's wrathful strife I'll stand,
Unshrinking, undismay'd; and, Deb'rah like,
On piles of slain, clothing these limbs in mail,
Cheer thee to vict'ry! Then, my princely lord,
Do not, for a brief hour of transient bliss,
Empire, and crown, and wreaths of future fame,
That wait to bless thy coming days, forego."

"I yield," return'd the exile with a sigh;
"Already thou beginn'st to taste the woes
That on a roamer of the mountains wait:
But, ere thou to the night-winds' kisses rude
Committ'st thy cheek, where love and beauty play
In lilies and celestial roses drest,
I will myself forth issue from the cave,
To mark how near the war-bands of the king
Toward our haunt approach, or on what plain
Or hill-top he doth his pavilion pitch."

O Joab, renowned thunderbolt of war,
I my sweet bride now to thy care confide :
Watch o'er her, chieftain, with a parent's eye,
And guard her, as the tigress shields her young,
From danger and surprise !”

The wedded pair

Reluctantly now parted. Abigail
With all her damsels 'twixt the warriors pass'd
To David's inmost cell ; and, as they pass'd,
Appear'd like beauteous meteors beaming bright
Round the dark hyperborean cliffs that frown
On Norway's stormy deep ; while o'er the plain,
Clad in their war-array, the foe to seek
David and Abishai boldly hied.
So at the fall of eve rush from their lair
Two youthful lions, o'er the waste to roam
And seek their fated prey ; pale terror strikes
To the night-founder'd pilgrim's sinking heart,
As, trembling, he through the lone valley flies,
That echoes to their roar. The steepy heights
Of Hachilah had the brave chiefs attain'd,
When Raphael, by command of the Supreme,
Descended from the courts of Heav'n to guide,
E'en to the tents of Saul, their weary feet.
Along the fields of ether glory mark'd
The seraph's shining way ; his golden plumes
Such streams of splendour through the night-air shed,
As made the lightning, wand'ring from the clouds,

Faint at the sight, and die like glow-worm rays
When the fair morning's smiles illumine the east.
Now shrouded in dense clouds of raven hue
The sun-clad cherub his all-radiant wings;
And, ere he met the pilgrim chieftains, veil'd
His sky-wrought lustre 'neath the humble shape
Of youthful shepherd, with his scrip and wand
O'er waste and moorland straying. Thwart the gloom
A meteor shot, and to young David's eye
The angel's form apparently reveal'd,
When thus the royal minstrel him address'd:—

“ Whither, O gentle shepherd, at this hour
So dark and lonely, stray'st thou? Rests thy tent
Upon these mountain wilds, or hast thou lost
The way that leads thee to thy distant home?
Or seek'st thou to recover some young kid
Or straggling lambkin wander'd from the fold?”

“ My tent nor rests upon these mountain wilds,
Nor have I lost my way,” Raphael replied.
“ Far from this wilderness my dwelling stands,
In tranquil fields that no rude storms infest,
Where murm'ring glide, beneath unfading shades,
A thousand streamlets, with their milky waves
Soothing th' enamell'd lawns and vernal bow'rs
With music tunable, where all the winds
Breathe harmony and love. A clime it is
Where discord comes not, nor the fiend of war
Bedews with blood the flow'r-besprinkled glebe;

But friendship pure there, from the world retir'd,
Finds its own heav'n of never-ending joys,
And roses plucks unguarded with a thorn.
I, in its vales and islets ever green,
Oft tune, on beds of purple hyacinths
And amaranth immortal, where young Spring
With autumn's golden fruit her blossom blends
On the o'ershadowing boughs, my oaten reed,
And hymn the universal Father's praise!
But may I ask, bold chiefs of warlike hosts,
If ye now seek the royal tents of Saul?"

"We are night-founder'd warriors, gentle swain,
Who seek the tents of the fam'd Hebrew king.
If thou across these dreary wilds canst guide
Our weary steps to where his bands encamp,
We will thy friendship amply compensate."

Thus David spake, and Raphael now replied:—
"When ev'ning reign'd, and ev'ry grove was mute;
When the brown vale and twilight-mantled hill
Were hush'd in silence; I the king beheld
(For well I know him) as o'er yonder moor
With nimble step I hasted, homeward bound,
Amid his sworded legions. On the plain
Halted the harness'd files; and, ere the star
That crowns the west arose, a camp they form'd,
Whose white tents seem'd, far off, a field of snow.
I know each woody glen, each bosky bourn,
Dark brow, and steep of these mountainous wilds;

For many a time I've journeyed o'er the waste,
And, without aid of moonbeam or of star,
Will guide you to the very tent of Saul."

Conducted by the angel, bold the chiefs
Approach'd th' encampment of the Hebrew king:
But not a blazing fire or waving light
Through the pavilions gleam'd, nor sentry's voice
Was heard upon the loud wayfaring winds.
A fearful stillness reign'd through all the host;
For Raphael had, ere he the chieftains met,
His wand outstretch'd (more potent than the rod
Of Hermes, or of Amram's mighty son)
O'er all the drowsy cohorts of the king,
And ev'ry warman bound in iron sleep,
That thunders could not break. Now from a cloud,
Which rushing gusts asunder rent, burst forth
Enliv'ning glimpses of the lucid moon,
And o'er the silent tents a quiv'ring ray
Shed luminous, as Raphael and the chiefs
Advanc'd within the lines. Prone on the turf
Warrior by warrior lay; unharness'd some,
And some for fight equipp'd. Here sentinels
Lay snoring to the winds, that o'er them pass'd
With mournful howl; there brawny cuirassiers
And unhelm'd captains, high in rank and fame,
Pass'd fields of battle in wild visions fought,
Or met the soft embrace of those they lov'd,
Beneath the umbrage of their peaceful vines.

David and Abishäi Raphael led
To the pavilion where the king repos'd.
Saul on his camp-couch lay ; his burnish'd spear
Was stuck beside his pillow in the ground.
How sound the warrior sleeps ! the night-winds howl,
And shake the loosen'd curtains of his tent ;
The gust his dark locks ruffles ; wild the blast
Strikes his plum'd helm and brazen shield, that hang
Above his princely head, with shrilly ring
Against each other harshly : but in vain
The stormy winds through his pavilion rush ;
In vain his raven-colour'd locks the gust
Doth rudely ruffle ; and in vain the clang
Of plume-crown'd casques and bucklers : the dark king
Awakes not from his death-like iron sleep,
Nor dreams who now, in foemen's steel, o'erwatch
His slumb'rous bed. Young Abishäi thus
The silence broke as he by David stood :—

“ Behold, my lord, the tiger in the toils :
Arise, and strike the monster to the heart !
In iron shackles fate hath bound him fast ;
Plunge deep thy lance in blood !. Deliv'rance comes
Involv'd in storms, and hors'd on midnight's wing ;
See what a glory beams her head around ;
While on her wait dominion, pow'r, and pomp,
Each bearing regal coronets of gold,
Sceptres, and robes of state ! Now give thy cares
All to the winds ; be what thy followers wish.

Remember how their shouts the cavern fill'd
When they proclaim'd thee king : then be thou wise,
And by the forelock seize, with dauntless hand,
The golden opportunity that Heav'n
Doth grant thee to be great. Be resolute,
And thou art king ! Feel'st not the crown, O prince,
Already on thy brow ? Thy looks are cold.
Has then regality no charms to please ?
Although ambition fails to nerve thy arm,
Methinks thy wrongs should stimulate thee, chief,
To strike a tyrant slumb'ring at thy feet.
Think of thy suff'rings ; of thy princess think ;
And in this dreamer view the fiend who tore
The weeping beauty from thy arms, and gave
Their treasure to a foeman ! Ha, my lord,
Does the remembrance of such inj'ries shake
At last your ill-tim'd mercy ? hence with it,
And vengeance be its executioner !
This hand shall do the deed, a gloried deed,
That will applauded be through all the land,
And yield the actor fame. Be well assur'd
I will not need to strike a second time."

The arm of Abishai was rais'd : a ray
Of moonshine thro' the storm-torn tent now stream'd,
And on his gaveloc obliquely glanc'd :
Across the visage of the slumb'ring king
The spear a steel-gleam cast, dread as the glare
That flashes from the growling lion's eye

When 'neath his fangs the bleeding victim dies.
Fatal had been the lance, but for the hand
Of godlike David; who, as he the arm
Of Abishäi caught, thus to him spake:—

“ Destroy him not—for who can guiltless strike
Th' anointed of the Lord? My peaceful steps
To rule and pow'r shall ne'er be mark'd with blood!
Ah, could I wear a crown by murder steep'd
In the red stream that feeds my sov'reign's heart?
Not all the rosy-blushing morn displays,
Or the vast ocean's wild abyss conceals;
Not all that Ophir's golden-sanded streams
Deep in their caverns hide from day's broad eye,
Could, on a throne with sunny gems o'erspread,
Give peace to him who, to attain such pomp,
Clogg'd his vile soul with blood! He is a king
Who, void of guilt, with manly heart sincere
And conscience pure, can face th' inconstant herd
When tumult and big faction round him roar.
Not all the storms that rush into the sky,
Nor jarring elements, his soul can move;
Not hosts of foes, nor e'en the brandish'd dart
Of death itself, can strike his dauntless soul
With terror or dismay! Who knows not fear,
Guilt's hideous shadow, he alone enjoys
Crowns and dominion in his peaceful breast,
Superior to the borrow'd pride of state.
The mantle white of innocence shall be

The robe in which my form I will invest
Whene'er the throne of Israel I ascend ;
Or to obscurity's lone vale return,
Exchange the falchion for the shepherd's crook,
And in the bow'r wide-spreading, and green grove,
For ever tend my flocks : far happier there
Than on imperial seats by murder won.
Live, regal prince of men, unharm'd by me,
Till thy appointed hour be come to die !”

Raphael, well-pleas'd to find in David dwelt
Virtues above heroic ; so refin'd
As made him more than human, and outshone
His actions meritorious in the field ;
With bright transfiguration reassum'd
His own effulgent glory, half reveal'd
To the awe-stricken chiefs, as o'er the camp
Illumination unimagined flash'd,
Then instantly expir'd ; while, like a star,
The radiant seraph flew to worlds above.

The warriors, mute with wonder, took the spear
And golden cruse, that by the pillow stood
Of the unconscious monarch, and return'd
With hasty stride through the still slumb'ring bands ;
Nor look'd behind them till they reach'd a hill
Many a furlong distant, o'er whose top,
With dewy buskin, walk'd the blushing dawn.
From thence, with voice clear as the mellow horn,
To Saul and Abner David call'd aloud.

Uprose the king of men, and with him rose
His warriors all, their harness buckling on.

“ Why who art thou that from the mountain top,
With voice so bold, speak'st to the king and me ? ”
Said Abner. To whom David thus replied :—

“ Art thou not Abner call'd, renown'd in war ?
And art thou not the chief of Israel's host ?
Who in the army can with thee compare,
Prince of the mighty ? Wherefore, warrior bold,
Sleep'st thou neglectful 'mid th' unguarded camp
Of Saul, thy royal lord ? Dost thou not know
The fiend of regicide, in storm-fraught clouds
Darkly enwomb'd, hath by his pillow stood,
Pointing the blade of death against his breast ?
See, idle dreamers, sons of ease and sloth,
Where is your monarch's spear and golden cup
That by his side were plac'd ? With mercy's shield
His couch I guarded from the blood-dyed lance
Of wild revenge, e'en as the ossifrage
Protects her callow nestlings from the hand
Of plund'ring mountaineer. Witness, ye stars,
Whose lamps the morning hath not yet put out—
And thou, fair conscious moon, that o'er the camp
Thy silver radiance shedd'st—my innocence !
Be witness too of all the wrongs I've borne
From him my falchion spar'd, when 'neath your beams
I've wander'd, night by night, o'er moorland wild
And dreary desert, where no sounds were heard

Save the blood-snuffing lion's distant roar,
With hunger pining, and with thirst subdued ;
Till on the sandy soil I've laid me down,
And banquetted on tears ! To you, bright host
That yet adorn the blue infinitude,
I utter'd my complaint ; and He that guides
Your varied wand'rings through immensity
My sad sighs heard, and sent me oft relief.
The Highest then be my protector still,
And in the hour of danger me enshield,
As from the keen-edg'd knife of fell revenge
At midnight I defended thee, O king."

" For ever be thou blest, my son," said Saul,
" For, in thy mercy to thy direst foe,
Thou hast surpass'd thy brightest deeds in war
Far as thy martial fame in the red field
Excels all competition ! Return, brave boy,
For I no more thy life will seek ; no more
Attempt to do thee harm. Return to court,
And those bright honours which thy dauntless arm
So bravely won on plains of fair renown
Thou with augmented lustre shalt resume.
Thy kind compassion, faith, and high exploits,
To ages yet unborn shall be the theme
Of minstrel and of seer. Farewell, my son !
A coronal of glory will thy brows .
Ere long encircle ; and th' imperial seat

Shalt thou ascend, mounting upon the necks
Of all thy vanquish'd foes to sov'reignty!"

The monarch toward Gibeah's palace turn'd,
Where in his halls of state in peace he dwelt ,
Till the rough voice of battle to the heights
Of fatal Gilboah call'd him : his brave son,
Now unpursued by the stern warrior-king,
In the embraces of fair Abigail
His sorrows and his cares awhile forgot.

END OF BOOK IX.

THE ROYAL MINSTREL.

BOOK X.

THE ARGUMENT.

The demon Belial conveys Ahinoam, a beautiful lady, from the country of Jezreel to the vale of Jeshimon—David finds her, falls in love, and escapes with her to the court of the king of Gath—the Philistines are assembled for battle on the plains of Shunem—Saul, from the top of mount Gilboah, beholds their superior strength—is alarmed—falls asleep—his dreadful dream—he consults the witch of Endor.

THE ROYAL MINSTREL.

BOOK X.

IN Jezreel's groves and fields, what time the sun
Had sunk beneath the jasper wave to rest,
With careless step the fair Ahinoam stray'd :
Loose flow'd her golden hair ; her youthful cheek,
Like Hebe's, with carnation blushes glow'd ;
The graces in her form and angel port
Were all personified, while sprightly wit,
That fir'd her radiant eye, o'er her bright charms
Tenfold enchantment cast. Belial had mark'd
The fair one as an object well to please
The am'rous eye of David: glad the fiend
Her listless steps pursued ; he caus'd the fields,
Th' embow'ring woods, and bloomy vallies, (fill'd
With echoed song, and fam'd by musky gales)
A more than wonted beauty to assume.
Unusual smiles the gentle ev'ning cast
On the gay damsel: music, wondrous sweet,
Warbled from ev'ry spray ; the op'ning flow'rs,

With colours painted exquisitely bright,
Redundant odours yielded : not the lawns
Of ancient Enna could such fragrance boast,
Nor to the senses such delight impart.
With sweets o'erpower'd, and lull'd by wizard sounds,
She on a mossy seat, within a grot
That flaunting woodbine circled, sat her down
To listen to the nightingale, to whom
Echo responses chanted : at her feet
A soothing lullaby the streamlet lisp'd ;
While on her stole soft sleep insensibly,
And, by the demon's arts, in slumbers deep
Seal'd her sweet eyelids. On her beauty now
E'en Philomel her song forbore, to gaze ;
The moon look'd from her silver clouds, push'd back
By mild Favonian winds, with envy pale,
To view a face that all her lustre sham'd.
The barbason, who with lascivious eye
The charms beheld of the bewitching maid,
Gently uprais'd her on an ebon car
Of darkness palpable, that now the sky
And all its glitt'ring hosts of stars o'ercast
With unimagin'd gloom ; while to the wain
Plutonian he loud growling tempests yok'd
And lightning steeds, that bore her, as along
The frightened sky, burthen'd with dreadful sounds,
The wild tornado rush'd, to the deep gl—
Of Jeshimon, the oratory oft,

Morning and ev'ning, of the royal bard,
While he amid the caves of Hachilah
Lurk'd with his valiant swordsmen. On a bank,
That border'd the blue hermit-brook which flows
Soft-whimp'ring through the dale, the demon laid
The princely lady. David now, awoke
By the shrill skylark's note, uprose, and, arm'd
Still ready for the fight, wander'd adown
The solitary valley, lost in thought.
Long the anointed chieftain had not stray'd
Ere he beheld, beneath the myrtle shade
Beside the hoary brook, whose rippling wave
Bright sparkled in the golden beams that shot
From th' eyelids of the rising prince of day,
Ahinoam, stretch'd upon a purple bed
Of hyacinths and violets dew-besprent,
Lock'd in th' embrace of sleep. The morning winds
Strove to divide the amber curls that hid
Her alabaster forehead; by her side
Lay a sweet poesy, dropp'd from her fair hand,
Compos'd of lovelier flow'rs than Proserpine
Let fall from Dis's iron-shafted car
When Ceres sought her through the world in vain.
David with ardent gaze the nymph survey'd:
Her beauteous form, and robes of brilliant dyes,
Proclaim'd her nobly born; nay, she appear'd
Like some aërial goddess of the clouds.
Fir'd with such charms, the plumed chieftain stoop'd

To taste th' ambrosial dewdrops that embalm'd
The roses beauty planted on her cheek,
When the fair damsel woke, and thus exclaim'd:—

“ Ye guardian seraphs, ministers of heav'n,
Where am I? Who has through the shades of night
Convey'd me to this wild and unknown vale?
What strange enchantment's this? Ha, who art thou?
Some dread immortal of another world,
That, hors'd upon the raven-colour'd steeds
Which draw the litter of the drowsy night,
Has borne me hither? Yet thy battle-gear
Speak thee a warrior youth of human mould.
Tell me, unknown, if thou so much canst tell,
How came I here,—or dream I still? for all
A magic vision to my sight appears.
Speak, noble youth, and let me hear thy voice,
For I am lost in wonder!” David thus:—

“ By whom thou to this unfrequented glen,
Beneath the covert of concealing night,
Hast been convey'd, is past my art to tell.
Yet, in return, if thou no goddess art,
But mortal born, permit me to inquire
Whence thou wast brought, sweet damsel, and thy name?”

“ Ahinoam is my name, of Jezreel's land,
Amid whose verdant fields last night I stray'd
To gather wild flow'rs, till, by sleep oppress'd,
I slumber'd in a drowsy-border'd cell;
Thence by some pow'r, mysterious and unknown,

I've been transported to these rocky wilds.
But hence with care and ev'ry wild alarm,
If thou, young warrior, kindly wilt become
My brave protector, and conduct me straight
To the abode of mortals, whence I may
Return in safety to my anxious friends."

"Happy, O lady fair," exclaim'd the chief;
"Thrice happy should I be from this glad hour
Thy fond protector to become for life,
So thou to share the fortunes wouldst consent
Of one whom for her own mischance doth mark,
And who no portion vaunts but his good sword.
Though in the desert, 'neath inclement skies,
Where bloom no flow'ers, where no rivers flow,
Nor snow-white flocks o'er blushing valleys stray,
But armgaunt wolves and lions nightly roam,
With hunger howling, I am doom'd to dwell;
Be thou but present, and the beauteous fields
Of Paradise will round me ever rise:
Thy breath the northern surly blast can change
To blest Arabia's soft ambrosial gales.
Let all the roses of fair Sharon fade,
And beauteous lilies die, the sun forget
To flame upon the forehead of the morn,
And dulcet music of the shades expire;
Yet on thy cheeks far lovelier roses bloom
Than blow in Sharon's vales; that swan-like neck
And swelling bosom whiter lilies yield

Than Carmel's fields can boast; those beamy eyes,
The twin-born stars of love, would e'en illumine
Egyptian night, and brighter beams disclose
Than do the smiles of the empurpled dawn;
While thy sweet voice more tuneful music breathes
Than woodland choirs that hail the new-born day!
O then consent a warrior's bride to be,
Whom fame hath crown'd with laurels: tho' the thorns
Of sharp misfortune lurk amid the wreaths,
Be thou but mine, and those sweet smiles each point
Shall pluck, and heal with heav'nly balm my wounds!"

"What mean'st thou, warrior, thus to talk of love
To one whom till this hour thou ne'er beheld'st?
'Tis true I oft-times in my dreams have seen
Thy airy image, clad in all the glare
Of war's habiliments, while from those eyes
Love lanch'd his lightnings; but, with all his pow'r,
That tyrant of the bosom cannot boast
He of one moment's rest has yet bereft
The daughter of the blood of Meshullam.
O, there is something in that face of thine
Would make me fear to venture on a voyage
With one of such a questionable cast
In love's connubial bark, lest my sweet peace
Should shipwreck'd be on jealousy's foul coast.
True, thou hast manly beauty that might win
A virgin's heart, though she had not, like me,
Beheld thee imag'd nightly in her dreams—

But I would learn, young chieftain, who thou art?
Would know thy name, thy lineage, and the tale
Of all thy martial deeds and proud exploits?"

"My name is David, who in Elah's vale
Slew the Philistine giant," said the chief.

"Then I am caught indeed," Ahinoam cried,
"Warrior renown'd, the pride of Israel's land,
I am thy own, if thou'lt vouchsafe to take
A daughter of the house of Meshullam
Thy wife to be. The gossip Fame hath spoke
Much of thy wisdom and exploits in war.
'Tis said that Samuel at his death foretold
Thy exaltation to the kingly seat;
That from thy line the crown would ne'er depart.
Then think me not too easily, O prince,
Won to thy arms, for who could thee refuse?"

"Transporting maid!" exclaim'd th' enraptur'd chief,
As to his breast he press'd his soul's desire;
"Partake my fortune; and, if love can make
Atonement for the loss of present pomp,
Thou shalt be rich indeed! I have resolv'd,
With all my faithful bands, who in yon cave
My orders wait, t' escape this very day
From Israel's land, and get me to the court
Of Maach's son, where I shall refuge find
From Saul's fell vengeance. Come, sweet maid, awhile
Thy country, friends, and kindred leave behind;
Love flies before, and points the pleasing way.

To tarry here ~~is~~ danger, fear, and death ;
But life, and peace, and joy, and blissful hours,
Await us in Philistia's happy groves.
There we the moments blest will charm away
On music's downy wings ; there I will hang
My battle-blade upon the myrtle boughs ;
And the sweet harp, as in the bow'r thou sitt'st,
To tales of melting tenderness attune :
There all the bus'ness of our lives shall be
In love each other striving to outvie—
An emulation fraught with blessedness !”

On to the cave he led the beauteous maid,
Whence, with his battle-train and wives, he fled
To Maach's son, who Ziklag to him gave,
Wherein he dwelt, secure from all his foes.^a

So from the falcon's talons 'scapes the bird
That late had wander'd from his happy grove,
Which he with panting breast and flutt'ring wing
Once more regains : again he hears the songs
Of all his feather'd brethren round him rise.
The trees, the bow'rs, the rivulets, and lawns,
New beauties wear to his rejoicing eye,
As on the wonted spray he lights ; and there
A song of gladness warbles to his mate.

For warfare now on Shunem's verdant plains
A host of mighty heroes are encamp'd,
The flow'r of the Philistine martial youth.
Their brazen chariots, and their cuirassiers,

Their archers, swordsmen, and fierce battle-steeds,
In wedges, lunes, and squares, and long-stretch'd lines,
Fill the wide prospect. To the western sun
In grand parade they proudly exercise
Heroic mock exploits of chivalry:

Their burning mail, and globed shields, and spears,
His flaming pomp reflect o'er all the field,
That to the eye of frightened Saul appears,
From Gilboa's top, a moving sea of light,
With here and there a floating banner dark,
That like the wing of death waves heavily,
And o'er the warlike picture casts a shade,
Chilling the fear-struck king. Back to his tent,
Which in the centre of the mountain stands,
Hemm'd by his brawny spearmen, he returns,
Despondent, yet dispatchful. Wild his eye
O'er the swift-changing glories of the sun,
That, on the hill-top now alighting, rests
His weary coursers, many a painful glance
With heavy heart doth cast: the last pale ray
Of the descending orb yet lingers faint
On the imperial gonfalon, that high
Above the king's pavilion brightly streams
To the fleet-winged gale, as loth to quit
A station so sublime. But see, it fades,
And, fading, dies, as enters now his tent
The prince of men, and to himself begins:—

“ How num'rous yonder hostile host appears !

Like those dark clouds of locusts that o'erspread
Fam'd Egypt's land, they cover all the plains :
By thousands I'm outnumber'd ! Be it so.
Perchance like yonder sun I've reach'd the goal,
And feebly glimmer o'er the verge of life,
Robb'd of meridian splendours ; while the shades
Of ev'ning round me rise, and to the world
Foretell th' approach of that long darksome night
Which never, never beamy morning knows !
So passes life away.—And yet, my soul,
Why these foreboding thoughts ? why this despair ?
I still may be the victor : conquest oft
Hath crown'd the energy of this bold arm.
O, were but David here ; that hero brave,
Who never enter'd yet the battle-field
But he the garland wore ! O, were he here
I should not fear the conflict's dread result,
Nor yet the numbers of th' insulting foe,
Though hell of ev'ry foe could form a host,
Outnumb'ring yonder army. But alas,
My cruelty has banish'd him the land !
I envied his bright virtues and renown,
That did o'ertop my own : and now he's fled
From him who should such high desert in arms
Have crown'd with honours lasting as his fame ;
And in those cities, which his deathful sword
So oft hath widow'd, now a refuge seeks.
Perhaps in yonder hostile camp the youth,

The youth redoubtable, his war-blade whets,
To take revenge for all the num'rous wrongs
With which his peerless brav'ry I've repaid!
Aye, let him come; I'm weary of this load
Of cares and anguish; let him have the crown,
If Heav'n so wills it! Heav'n to me is deaf;
Nor vows nor off'rings at my hand accepts!
Its oracles are silent; but strange signs,
Such as forewarn a state of sudden change
And sad disasters, speak as thunder loud,
And fright me nightly. When around the camp
I walk at midnight watch, the rushing stars
Seem all on fire; and o'er the northern sky
A thousand meteors play, that in their sport
Exhibit warlike fields,—chariots and horse
Of sparkling fire, and lancers clad in flame,
Who rush to furious battle, till the heav'ns
Seem all a sea of blood! Then looks the moon
Sickly and pale, as though her doom was come;
While to her dark foundations shakes the earth,
As with a fev'rish ague! Such portents
Are harbingers that still precede the fall
Of empires and of kings. If fall I must,
Glory's bright ray shall mark the grave where rest
My war-worn bones, where sleep at last in peace
My ashes, free from all the cares of state.
I'll in my setting nobly imitate
The burning orb of day, and greatly sink

Amid a crimson field of hostile blood,
And all the flaming splendours of red war!"

Worn with fatigue, around him Saul now call'd
His martial chiefs, and bade them set the watch;
Then threw himself despondent on his couch,
And sought in sleep a refuge from his cares.
But ah, in vain he sought repose in sleep!
Sleep came not with her balmy poppies crown'd,
But like a fury with her snaky locks,
And conscience by her side, filling his dreams
With images of horror. From his brow
Th' attendants wipe the chilling sweat; his couch
Beneath him trembles; and his ebon locks
Look like the quills o' th' angry porcupine;
His hands are clench'd, his teeth gnash horribly;
And now he wakes, and, starting from his bed,
Rushes, like one distracted, to the arms
Of Doëg, his chief groom, and thus exclaims:—

"O, do I live indeed? or am I sunk
To those infernal regions of despair
Where damned spirits dwell? No, 'twas a dream,
The offspring wild of sleep: but yet it was
A dream full fraught with such dire sights and sounds
As with transcendent horrors have transfix'd
My inmost soul! List, Doëg, to the tale
Of this night's dreadful vision:—I, methought,
Led to the battle my brave troops, and fought
With more than wonted courage; when, amid

The piles of slain, I, by an arrow pierc'd,
Fell, and expir'd. But O, where shall I find
Words to pourtray what follow'd?—fearful scenes
That freeze my blood to ice, while through my brain
Roll seas of liquid fire, and burning snakes
My eyeballs pierce with their red forked tongues!
Methought forth issued from the gaping wound
My wond'ring soul, that, of her muddy robe
Of bleeding clay divested, sprung to light,
With faculties and pow'rs sublime possess'd.
Astonish'd, I now found myself all sight,
All mind, all hearing, volatile as flame,
And light as ether, as I musing stood
Amid the groans and shrieks, the shouts and din
Of fierce blood-gushing battle; while around
A thousand souls, from mangled corpses fall'n,
Were flitting through the air! A host of fiends
Encompass'd me: their wings were dark as night,
Sulphureous flames and suffocating stench
Stream'd from their horrid jaws! I shriek'd for help,
But help was far away; I would have fled,
But they like bloodhounds seiz'd me, and now bore
Their victim on a whirlwind through the clouds.
Methought we pass'd ten thousand radiant suns,
And then approach'd the mansions of the blest,
Whose glories were incomprehensible!
Ah, then I hop'd that I should enter there,
And from my curs'd infernal guards escape;

But, when we reach'd the sun-bright port of Heav'n,
A host of thunders burst upon my head,
And pointed lightnings shot me through with pangs
Unutt'able! Down headlong then we fell,
Involv'd in flames and smoke, more swift than thought.
A fiery gulf receiv'd us in our fall;
Hell from beneath was at our coming mov'd,
And shriek'd despair through all her dark domains!
Then came a troop of grisly spectres by—
It was the murder'd pontiff and his sons:
Aloud they scream'd, and cried, ' Let hell prepare
Her fiercest torments for th' accursed Saul!
Pour on the murd'rer volleys hot of hail,
And toss him on yon sea of liquid fire!'
While as they spake streams spouted from their wounds;
O, I was delug'd with a crimson show'r,
And drown'd in gushing blood! Then in their arms,
From which the livid flesh now piecemeal fell,
Thy king the skeletons, with demons damn'd,
Seiz'd, ruthless, and on lakes of billowy flames,
Where twice a thousand fiery serpents hiss'd,
Loud yelling, toss'd him! There I writhing lay,
While round me the infernal snakes their folds
Twisted so horribly, that, with th' excess
Of dreadful agony, I shrieking woke!"

“ You do forget yourself,” said Doëg fierce,
“ To let a vision of the troubled brain,
That with conceits most strange the fancy fills,

Disturb you thus : no more of this, ~~my~~ sire.
What! shall a kingly hero, who so oft
In battle's crimson tide has to the hilt
His broadsword dipp'd, here in the tented field,
Hemm'd with his guards, amid his host encamp'd,
Be thus intimidated by a dream?
How would your warriors brook to see their chief
A slave to childish fears, with visions pale
As the blanch'd maid that dreams her lover dies?
Resume your courage, be again yourself!"

"It is impossible! thou canst not think
What pangs this night I've suffer'd. When this flesh
Sinks to the grave, or fades upon the pile
To smoky ashes; when the curtain's dropp'd
Of frail mortality; ah then, what scenes
Will burst to light of bliss or endless pain!
Darkness involves the future; nor hath one,
Of all the myriads that have made the leap
Into that dread profound, that dark unknown,
Return'd, its awful secrets to reveal.
O, should my doom be what my dream pourtray'd!
I cannot longer bear the dark suspense
Of what will be this doubtful war's result.
I have of God inquir'd; but He declines
To answer me by Urim or by seer.
All heav'nly oracles to me are dumb.
O, that I knew the mysteries occult,
Of midnight witchcraft; that I now could find

Some wizard or enchantress deeply vers'd
In magic lore, who would to me reveal
The hidden secrets of futurity !
But I have banish'd them the land, and now
I lack their pow'rful aid. Tell me, good groom,
If thou indeed canst tell, where dwells one skill'd
In the fam'd eastern Magi's wondrous arts ?”

“ In Jezreel's vale there lives a hag, renown'd
For her all-pow'rful witch'ries through the coast,”
Doëg the fell replied ; “ upon her wait
A host of fiends and spirits of the deep,
The earth, and air : 'tis said that by her arts
She can the ashes of the tomb collect,
And with them clothe corruption's rotting bones ;
Yea, those eyes on which the worms have fed
With ghastly speculation re-illumine ;
And bid that tongue, which the dark grave hath bound
Ages in iron silence, give response
To such as dare the spectre form address !
It is believ'd that this most potent witch
The mistress is of all the sciences,
Practis'd of old by ancient seers deep read
In divination, spells, and arts abstruse.
On the forlorn and wood-encircled shores
That skirt the land-lock'd sea of Cinneroth
Stands a huge rock, o'ergrown with aconite,
Hemlock, and shrieking mandrake, where still hangs
A magic horn, which, when sev'n times blown,

Be where she may, on ocean, earth, or air,
Enchantment's daughter instantly appears.
Thither, my princely lord, this hour we'll speed :
But first put off those robes, and be array'd
In gear that doth befit a homely carl."

Saul thus : "Thou counsel'st well : by midnight watch
We'll reach the lonely shores of that wild sea.
My armour-bearer, trusty Azrikah,
Shall likewise with us go. I long to meet
This wide-renowned hag of sorcery.
Yes, I'll dive deep into the arts of hell ;
With magic incantations burst the tomb ;
Blacken the skies with spells ; bid demons draw
The curtain thick of darkness, that conceals
The unknown scenes of dread futurity,
And view them as they rise with dauntless look !
Nay, witchcraft's hand, grasping the lightning's blaze,
Shall drag my fate to light that dwells in gloom
To pow'r of mortals impertransible,
And I will on it gaze, although the sight
Should blast me with unutt'able despair !"

Meanwhile, amid the cavern of the isle,
Whose proud cliffs tow'r above the jarring waves
Of Cinn'roth's tempest-troubled ocean, sat
In consultation deep the thrones of hell ;
And thus spake Satan to th' associate peers :—

"So far has Belial with this shepherd king
Succeeded as we wish : he hath his fill

Of love and am'rous sport. But stay not here ;
More must be yet achiev'd this boy to crush.
His rage for bloody warfare still prevails
O'er love's soft influence : he the hero now,
Spite of lascivious dalliance, reassumes ;
Back'd with exulting conquest, 'sunder rends
The flow'ry wreaths of nuptial fondness, bound
By beauty round him, and with his fierce bands
Of daring outlaws wakes the battle shout,
E'en from th' affrighted fields of Shur to where
The borders of fair Mizraim's land begin.
His banner redly streams above the heads
Of all our faithful worshippers, who were
Of old the tenants of that fertile coast.
His thund'ring war-note breaks their calm repose ;
The gleamy terrors of his blood-stain'd brand
Flash o'er their plains, and desolate e'en all
Their flame-encircled cities. At the hands
Of this man-queller neither beauty, youth,
Childhood, nor age, can mercy find : his sword
Spreads universal massacre around,
That none may live to tell his deeds at Gath.
Thrones and dominions here in consult met,
Say, what have we to hope for, what not dread,
Should this anointed chieftain once obtain
The crown long promis'd to him and his race—
If he in sov'reignty supreme should sit
On Israel's throne ? His conquests then will spread

From sea to sea : the nations that now bow
Before our shrines the zealot will destroy ;
Our temples level with the ground ; o'erturn
Their altars, and our very names root out
From this our earthly empire ! Surely then
It doth behove us, princes of the air,
Some sudden and decisive blow to strike,
Which may o'erwhelm these Hebrews, or at least
Impede the conquests of this warlike youth :
For I am not to learn, assembled pow'rs,
That Saul draws to his end ; eternal fate
Has doom'd him on mount Gilboa's heights to fall
Then David steps into the vacant throne,
And his heav'n-favour'd empire spreads o'er all
The trembling nations round."

" If," Moloc said,
" Heav'n favour him in spite of all we do,
When on the battle-plain Saul sleeps in death
One of his sons set up ; inspire some chief,
High in authority, and highly fam'd
For his recorded deeds of val'rous might,
To place the rightful heir upon the throne,
Many will cleave to David ; but the rest,
From love and opposition, will uphold
The sons of Saul, who have, to back their cause,
Birthright and royal cities, arms, and hosts
Of warriors firmly to their house attach'd.
May, ere to-morrow's sun his last ray casts

On the great western deep, old Canaan's prince
Red on the turf be stretch'd in iron sleep,
Again to lift nor battle-axe nor spear!
Pow'rs and dominions, let us to these wars,
And aid with all our might Philistia's host.
Left to his fate is the dark warrior king :
Let fell despair, the terror of mankind,
On Gilboa's tented top his heart possess,
His vigour blast, his better arm unnerve,
That he amid the battle-tide may sink,
And drop the lance and buckler. Then, ye thrones,
Shall we employment find ; 'twill be our task,
Nay, our delight and glory, to inspire
The bosoms of the jarring Israelites
With all the rancour and the fire of hell
Against each other ! O, we shall behold
Delug'd with blood this garden of the world :
Their curtain'd fane, their boasted oracle,
We'll drown in streams that they themselves have drawn
Each from the other's heart ! Thus the whole race
Shall be extirminated. Canaan's land
An altar shall be made, on which we'll offer
The reeking carcasses of Abr'ham's sons,
A sacrifice sweet-smelling to their God !"

Applauding shouts from the infernal clan
Resounded through the cavern, as the king,
With Doëg and his armour-bearer, reach'd
The cloud-capt rock on Cinn'roth's lonely shore.

His brawny arm the fell-eyed groom put forth,
And seiz'd the magic horn. Sev'n times he blew
A blast that echo'd o'er the rolling deep,
And drown'd the wild waves' voice; the moon was set,
And rayless was the scene. A storm arose
That rudely the resurging billows took
By their white tops, and flung them o'er the rocks,
Down-streaming, smoking, bellowing to the winds.
A pitchy car, by howling dragons drawn,
Involv'd in clouds dark as the shaggy locks
Of wintry midnight, at the warrior's feet
In thunder roll'd. Saul's hair now stood erect;
A fearful trembling seiz'd his lab'ring heart.
A voice, hoarse as the raven's fateful notes
When she with purpled beak feeds on a corse,
Deep as a passing death-bell, from a cloud
Was heard to say, "Mortals, approach! that I
May learn why at this hour of night and storms
Ye call me to these unfrequented shores."

The king advanc'd; his heart beat audibly:
"I've heard, he cried, thou in prescience rare
Art deeply read; that with the world unseen
Thou oft dost converse hold; and canst reveal,
By thy communion with the spirits dark,
Events unborn, that in the murky womb
Of dim futurity lie hid from man.
Therefore I've hither cited thee, that thou
The ponderous marmorean jaws mayst burst

Of the cold sepulchre, if so thou hast
The wondrous pow'r, and call from thence the shade
Of one who long hath in its confines slept."

The hag replied :—" Mortal, thou soon shalt learn
That I've the pow'r: though in the tomb his dust
Hath slumber'd ages out, yet with a word
I can each organ, faculty, and limb,
Restore to full perfection." From her car
The sorc'ress stepp'd: a mammoth's ample skin
Her ugly and gigantic limbs conceal'd;
Her waist a fell sev'n-headed serpent 'zon'd,
Whose scaly folds shone like the belt that rounds
The azure cope of heav'n, whose forked tongues,
Like glowing bars of fiery iron dipp'd
In bubbling water, hiss'd full horribly;
While bright as twice sev'n burning lamps appear'd
The monster's frightful eyes. Her arm the witch
Now wav'd, when, with a rushing roaring blast,
Her hell-built waggon vanish'd. To the strand,
Where dash'd the foamy wave, she bent her steps,
Mutt'ring foul charms! and now her hollow voice
Sounds on the whistling blast deep as the notes
Of Neptune's requiem o'er the wat'ry grave
Of those brave warriors who for freedom die,
And in his dark sepulchral caverns sleep.
Three times she calls on Tartak of the isle;—
The guardian demon o'er the mountant waves
In all his terrors, now to mortal ken

Appears advancing. E'en fell Doëg shakes ;
And Saul, rememb'ring well his dream, shrinks back,
Grasping the arm of Azrikam the strong.
The fiend with burning footstep touches now
The groaning shore, that with unusual weight
Affrighted sinks : his stature overlooks
The tallest cliff that juts the dark flood o'er ;
His face is black as thickest smoke of hell ;
And his fierce eye glares like the vivid blaze
Of the wild lightning issuing from the storm.
A crown of hideous vipers, fed with blood
Of infants offer'd at his hellish shrine,
Surrounds his brows, dire as Medusa's locks,
Or the fell snaky curls of Cerberus.
O'er his broad Atlantëan shoulders hangs
A cloud of rumbling thunder, from which burst
Red flame-wing'd bolts, that plough the riven rocks.
The heroes with the dark-eyed hag embark ;
The fiend their helmsman is. The tempest raves
With pow'r above control ; the surges swell
To mountains, that the floor of heav'n assail ;
And the pale warriors mount amid the clouds,
Now hanging on a liquid precipice
Ten thousand fathoms high, where wildly roars
The dreadful mutiny of winds and waves,
And now push'd down as many fathoms low ;
While far above them sounds the threat'ning storm,
And all is gloom impenetrable, save

Where the fiend's ghastly eye shoots lightning gleams
Athwart the dismal vales and gulfs of death.
Now on the winds around them shrieking walk'd
Mysterious forms and foul malicious sprites,
Terrific shades, phantoms, and bleeding ghosts.
A supernatural light encircled them
At intervals, and to the heart of Saul
Struck fearfulness and trembling. On the isle
At length the billows heav'd their weary bark.
The sorc'ress to the cavern led the way :
The portal op'ning at her high behest,
With his attendants, by th' enchantress led,
Enter'd the king, and at the altar bow'd ;
But he th' assembled demons saw not there,
In close divan conferring. The grim witch
On the green flames infernal incense casts,
And far and near the vivid blaze illumines
The vaulted hall of magic. Now the hag
To Saul thus spake:—" Mortal, I have complied
So far with thy desire, and hither brought
Thee and thy followers to this sea-girt isle,
Where witchcraft her nocturnal rites performs :
But well thou know'st what cruel Saul has done ;
How in his zeal he sought to slay all those
Who traffic in enchantment's mystic arts
With such familiar spirits as await
Their high commands, and wilt perchance betray
The secrets of the fatal sisterhood,

And what to mortal eye shall be reveal'd
Within this magic cavern, to the king."

" By Him that made me, by th' eternal God,
Break thou death's iron sleep, awake the dead,
And, rending ope the sepulchre's dark jaws,
Call Samuel the fam'd prophet up to me ;
No harm to thee shall come for what thou dost,
Nor shall the king thou fear'st know aught of all
The dark transactions done beneath this roof,
By thy most potent witcheries and spells,
More than he knows this hour !" The mutt'ring hag
Her charms and incantations now began ;
The flames upon the altar died away,
And all was dark as the sepulchral vault.
Now burst a host of thunders through the cave ;
And vivid flames, far off, at intervals
Flung o'er the craggy rocks a ghastly light,
That instantly expir'd in deeper gloom.
Dread sounds beneath were heard ; asunder yawn'd
The trembling rocks, and ghastly streams cast forth
Of sulph'ry fire ; earthquakes the cavern shook :
From a ravine, whence sable clouds arose,¹
Involv'd with dismal gleams, Satan appear'd
In aged Samuel's form,^m with solemn air
And visage wan slow-rising : his sunk eye
Vacant of speculation seem'd, though fix'd
Upon the king ; its glassy glare transpierc'd
His soul with bolts of ice. Low bow'd to earth

Before the shadowy spectre, palely grim,
The trembling monarch, when the vision thus:—

“ Why from the chambers of the sepulchre,
Breaking its peaceful slumbers, warrior king
Of God’s elect, hast thou call’d up my shade ? ”

Hoarse scream’d the hag, and dropp’d her talisman,
To learn the Hebrew chief before her stood ;
The cavern from its inmost vaults sigh’d back
The doleful voice of fear ; each mortal felt
The curdling blood run cold through all his veins ;
While far more dreary to the monarch sound
The echoes of the phantom’s hollow voice
Than the deep groans of one whom robbers vile
Have plunder’d, and left welt’ring in his blood,
To the lone trav’ler who at night’s dark noon
The ill-fam’d forest passes, faint with fear.

The king the terrors of the hag appeas’d,
And thus the ghost address’d :—“ Prophet rever’d,
Pity the mis’ries of a king, on whom
Thy sacred hand once pour’d th’ anointing oil,
And with the regal sov’reignty endued !
The proud Philistines with their num’rous host
Hem me on ev’ry side ; while Heav’n, alas,
Is from me quite departed, and no more
By prophets or by dreams doth answer me :
Therefore I from the shadows of the grave
Have call’d thee up, that thou, O holy seer,
What I shall do may’st now to me make known.”

The pallid spectre frowning thus replied :—
“ Why dost thou ask of me, rejected prince,
When that thy God hath left thee? why hast thou
Disturb’d the iron slumbers of the tomb,
And burst the bands of death? He from thy hand
Hath rent the kingdom, from thy brow pluck’d off
Th’ imperial diadem, and giv’n the rule
To Jesse’s youthful son. On Gilboa’s mount,
Ill-fated warrior, thou shalt tombless lie
Amid the wreck of battle, and the piles
Of dead and dying, heap’d by slaughter’s hand,
Till from thy shoulders by Philistine swords
Thy head be lopp’d, and hung the tow’rs to grace
Of thy victorious foes! To-morrow’s sun,
When in the west with faded beam it sets,
Shall redly glance across thy blood-smear’d mail,
As on fam’d Gilboa’s gory turf thou sleep’st,
And o’er thee roll the crimson tide of war!
Thy num’rous army, and thy princely sons,
Shall also fall before their dreadful foes
Amid the strife, and lift the spear no more!”

The grisly spectre ceas’d: the thunders roar
As through the earth he sinks; the livid flames
Expire in tenfold gloom; the shiver’d rocks
Together clash with such terrific noise
As though the globe was to her centre split,
And through the ocean the enchanted isle
Was with the phantom sinking. On the ground

The king now fell, with bitter grief oppress'd,
And lost all sense to pain, all poignant wo,
In kind lethæan stupor. Him the chiefs
And the dark pythoness of witchcraft rais'd,
And seated on a rock. At her command
A band of potent spirits, on a cloud
Of pitchy darkness, from the cavern bore
The hag and frightened warriors through the air,
That with fierce lightnings, winds, and storms was rent,
O'er sea and land, to ancient Jezreel's vale;
And, as the morning's sweetly-nited star
O'er Gilboa's cloud-involved mountain peep'd,
The weary king the Hebrew trenches reach'd,
Then on his couch in sleep awhile forgot
The cares and dread forebodings of his soul.

So, swell'd by wintry storms, o'er its dread rocks
The Niagara, clad in smoke and storms,
Rolls, frets, and thunders with terrific roar,
Till distance soothes its rugged waves to peace,
That, in the ample bosom of the lake
Their surface bright expanded, sleeping hold
A crystal mirror to the arch of Heav'n.

END OF BOOK X.

THE ROYAL MINSTREL.

BOOK XI.

THE ARGUMENT.

The Philistine host marches to offer battle to the Hebrews—description of its leaders—David's arrival to join Achish, and dismissal from the army—the mutiny of his bands at the sight of Ziklag in flames—the festivity of the rovers—David's discomfiture of them, and his return to Ziklag loaded with spoil.

THE ROYAL MINSTREL.

BOOK XI.

O'ER the great sea that borders Palestine,—
Whose pure expanse, unruffled by the breeze,
Redden'd with crimson blushes to behold
Aurora rising from her Tithon's bed
With wanton eye, the fountain of the dawn,—
And o'er Judæa's plains,—young Day began
To pour a flood of light, while to his car
The rosy-finger'd Hours the fiery steeds
Of Phœbus harness'd. On his shoulders Night
Flinging his ebon mantle, rent with storms,
Grimly retir'd, as up th' ethereal steep
The heav'nly coursers mounted of the sun,
And bade the stars withdraw;—when from their tents
The army of Philistia issued forth,
Each soldier bracing on his war-array
To fit him for the field.

So pours the hive
Its millions on the wing-emburden'd air,
Warm with the solar rays, when her wax'd cell
Their sov'reign quits, a foreign home to seek.
The heralds sound to arms; the cymbals clash;
The flute, the trumpet, and the martial pipe
The squadrons summon, sheath'd in brazen mail;
While hill and vale the warlike call repeat!
Each lordly chief his deep'ning files leads on,
Battalion on battalion, square on square,
Legion on legion, till the army all
Move in full march 'thwart Aphek's cover'd plains,
Daring to deeds of warfare Israel's host!
So to the Biscayan shore, when tempests rise
And cloud-compelling winds their prison burst,
The foam-spread surges in succession roll,
And liquid mountains push each other on
O'er the resounding strand, o'er cliff and rock,
Till land with ocean mingles, lost and sunk
Beneath the roaring deluge.

On the breeze
Their gonfalons, with gems and gold beset,
Proud floating, caught the glances of the sun,
And blaze to blaze reflected; broad their shields,
Their sparkling breastplates, and chalybeate helms,
Their moving groves of spears and steely brands,
A flood of dazzling splendour shed around.
Loud was the weapon-clang; the groaning earth

In thunder echoed to their sounding steps,
And o'er their heads, unseen by mortal eye,
The princes and the pow'rs of hell and air
Hover'd, like vultures lur'd by scent of blood,
Eager to view the armies mix in fight.
On the right wing a thousand chariots mov'd,
Led by stern Zior, from the giant line
Of regal Og descended, who once reign'd
O'er Bashan and her forests, o'er the plains
Of Salcah and Mount Hermon, to the bourn
Of Sihon, king of Heshbon. This proud chief,
By Israel of his birthright dispossess'd,
Immortal hatred to the Hebrews bore.
Aloft he stood amid his brazen car,
Guiding the coursers' reins ; his brawny hand
A massy jav'lin shook, that round his brows
A beamy lustre shot ; his warlike form
Was noble and commanding ; on his head
A burganet of gold conspicuous shone
With plumes of amber hue ; his scaly mail
Was mingled steel and brass ; refulgent arms,
That with the sun's reflected radiance glar'd
Like a tall beacon blazing on the winds !
A lion's shaggy skin his shoulders hid,
And the bright impress of his flaming targe
Was a tremendous lion, on whose head
A glory, like the peerless star of noon,
Seem'd centred ; while beneath his sanguine feet

Lay an expiring bull. The army's left
Was also wing'd with chariots : he who led
Their iron ranks was Gathrimond the dark.
From Ekron to the flood marine, that laves
The sunny shores and promontories green
Of Canaan's ancient land, his pryncedom stretch'd.
Haughty and cruel was his daring soul ;
And his commands were issued with a voice
That sounded through the ranks, despite of all
The martial coil and din of rattling wheels,
Like mountain torrents heard amid the war
Of howling winds and tempests.

His stout limbs

Were sheath'd in pond'rous iron black as night ;
And from his ebon casque stream'd on the winds
A train of gilded horse-hair, that appear'd
Bright as a comet whose portentous fires
Speak to the trembling nations fearful change ;
While o'er his sable mail his shield of gold
Shone like the full-orb'd moon when thro' the clouds
Of winter's storm-fraught night she struggling breaks,
And cheers the pilgrim with a flood of light.
Equal with him in high command were join'd
Young Asmarveth and Abdoma, who reign'd
O'er Ashdod and o'er Gaza, with their towns,
To Egypt's bounteous river. In their train
Follow'd a thousand charioteers of fame
For deeds of valour in the lines of war ;

Expert to rein the fiery steed, to guide
The battle-car through the red fields of death,
And hurl the missile jav'lin on the foe,
From Edom's land of vines and olives drawn,
And Shamir, that among the mountains stands
With lofty battlements and turrets girt,
And where the Nile on ocean's bosom pours
His ample waters from his silver urn.
The van, of horsemen form'd, own for their chief
The princely Ishbak; he the royal tow'rs
Of Gerar rul'd: his war-horse, fleet and strong,
The golden bit champ'd prancing, as from far
He snuff'd the battle, and with neighings loud
Now to the trump and weapon-clash replied:
His trappings were of silver, set with stars
Of amethyst, sardonyx, and pure gold.
Bred in Arabia's aromatic fields
And groves of cinnamon, his arched neck
With thunder seem'd array'd; the glitt'ring spear,
The rattling quiver, and the soldiers' shout,
Inspir'd his breast with fierceness; while his lord,
Whom through the battle-swell he oft had borne,
With grace inimitable him bestrode.
The prince's armature was azure steel,
With precious gems beset, that shone more bright
Than do the firmamental stars which deck
The deep-blue cope of heav'n.—

His silv'ry crest

A plume, blood-colour'd, crown'd, that nodding glow'd
Like flames upon an alpine mountain clad
In everlasting snows. A costly vest
Of regal purple 'cross his shoulders flow'd,
Where hung his steel bow bright, and quiver fill'd
With thirsty arrows : on his ample shield
The image of Astarté, queen of heav'n,
'Mid radiant clouds was seen ; around her knelt
Sidonian virgins singing nightly hymns,
While o'er their heads the full-orb'd moon appear'd
A halo of bright glory spreading round
The worshipp'd goddess. The fair train was led
By the betroth'd of Ishbak, nam'd the brave :
Her form in gold was exquisitely wrought ;
And when at night the warrior in his tent
To rest retir'd he knelt before the shield,
And his fond vows repeated : 'twas the work
Of Hiram's father, in chalcography
And artifice Vulcanian deeply skill'd.
The clouds of foot, spearmen, and light-arm'd troops,
Of various tribes and nations were compos'd,
And led by num'rous chiefs of wide renown,
With whom appear'd the famed prince of Tyre,
Who led, embodied close, the flow'r and pride
Of that strong city on the margin built
Of stormy ocean, fill'd with merchandise
Of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls,
Vessels of iv'ry and sweet-scented wood,

Odours and frankincense, and wine and oil,
Fine linen, purple, scarlet, blue, and silk,
Marble and iron, brass and burnish'd steel.
Bold were her sons, and fearless dar'd the wave.
To Persia's gulf, to India's distant sea,
To the Ligurian and Iberian shores,
And Cimbria's barb'rous coasts, their vessels steer'd,
Till their proud tow'rs the mart of nations grew.
To these succeeded Möab's pow'rful bands
From Bajith, Dibon, and the plains of Kir,
From Medebar and Nebo, from the fields
Of Heshbon, and from Sibmah's vine-clad vales.
They by Shahazima commanded were :
In horrid pomp he strode along the ground,
That trembled to his footsteps ; round his helm
A serpent wrought in brass its volumes coil'd,
And, like a furnace, from his jaws cast forth
Redundant fire and smoke ! for he was skill'd
In wizard arts, and pow'rful spirits call'd,
As ancient records tell, on him to wait.
His buckler, jav'lin-proof, a compound was
Of ev'ry shining metal : on its field
A crowd of magic characters appear'd,
Written in living flame, that cast a blue
And ghastly circle of dismaying light
Round his Herculean form, and, when he struck
Th' enchanted ægis, thunders shook the earth !
Chalybeate was his corslet, and his robe

A leopard's skin, dyed in the blood of kings
Who 'neath his conq'ring brand had fall'n in fight.
But in the midst, high on his battle-car
Of Ophir's purest gold, Astarotha,
Prime of Philistia's kings and warlike chiefs,
Right awfully sublime stood like a god!
His steeds, snow-colour'd, on he fiercely drove:
Their brazen hoofs shook the resounding plain,
Their manes luxuriant floating on the air,
Like the slow-sailing clouds of fleecy white.
That hem the mountain top at summer's dawn.
Not Hector, when amid the ranks of war
He mail'd his limbs in the celestial arms,
Forg'd by a god, of great Pelides' son,
Torn from Patroclus' blood-distained corse,
Blaz'd with such dreadful splendour, or such deeds
Magnanimous in fight hop'd to achieve,
As this Phenician: his habergeon glow'd
With crimson lustre like the setting sun;
His brigantine was rings of polish'd steel
And beaten gold commingled, which cast forth
Rays of a thousand hues; his greave-clad legs
Like brazen pillars shone; and o'er his casque
Of iron, black as night, his varied plumes
Look'd beauteous as the rainbow's brilliant arch
Bestriding the dark storm.

His neck and arms
With sapphire brooches and with chains of gold

Were splendidly bedeck'd ; his Tyrian robe
With starry gems was stiff ; his baldric shone
Conspicuous from afar with the fam'd tale
Of Samson, when by the Philistines led
To Gaza's tow'rs a captive, of his sight
And sacred locks, that source of all his strength,
By an insidious woman's arts depriv'd.
His target flash'd a stream of yellow light,
And in its field the sun his image saw
As in a sea of glass !

His beamy spear,
That with the blood of kings had oft been drunk,
Above his crest glar'd like a stream of fire
Shot from a cloud across a waving wood.
Last came the royal Achish, Mäoch's son
And king of Gath, who led the army's rear.
His bands were they that in Beth-dagon dwelt,
In Madmanah and Rimmon, and the vale
Where Eshtäol and Zorah's cities stand :
With these young David's warmen bold were rank'd,
Battle against their sov'reign lord to wage.

Fresh from th' invasion of that land of vines,
Of fruits and flow'rs, which stretches from the coast
Of Shur to Egypt's reed-encircled brooks,
Where dwelt the Gezrites and Amalekites,
Whom they had all destroy'd, and with much spoil
Enrich'd the tow'rs of Ziklag, their strong hold,
Our hero and his worthies join'd the host

Of their protector Mäbch's regal son,
While yet their batter'd mail was red with blood,
Ere from their swords the clotted gore was wip'd
Of Am'lek's fiercest princes. Sanguine wav'd
Their banners, in the purple life-stream drench'd
Of Geshur's prowest captains. David's arms
With crimson torrents deeply were distain'd,
Yet blaz'd with peerless radiance, like the sun
'Twixt the rose-colour'd clouds of blushing morn.
The plumes that nodded o'er his sparkling casque
Were white as winter rivers foaming down
A precipice of rocks; his weapon blade
Was that gigantic brand with which he lopt
From off his shoulders fell Goliath's head,
And, studded bright with gems, more fiercely gleam'd
Betwixt the moving ranks than ruddy flames
Seen through a waving forest!

His vast shield
Was beaten gold of Parviam; on its orb
The battle on Beth-horon's corse-strew'd plains
By Hosea gain'd was gloriously emblaz'd.
O'er frighted Gibeon's tow'rs the midday sun
Check'd his refulgent chariot and stood still,
Unmindful of his journey to the west,
To gaze upon the deathless deeds in fight
Of Israel's sons, and crown their leader's fame
With glory most miraculous and strange!
Here o'er the vale of Ajalon appear'd

The rayless moon, with dread and wonder pale;
And there brave Hosea, mounting hills of slain!
Bright vict'ry in a blaze of pomp sat thron'd
High on his helm, that lighten'd all the field,
While clouds of warriors from his falchion fled.

Now from his thund'ring battlewain the prince
Astarotha his dark stern eye cast back,
And saw the ensign of fam'd Jesse's son
Display'd aloft in air; saw too, amid
The armed enfilades, his bloodstain'd shield
A flood of radiance shed o'er ear and steed,
O'er the fierce rider's helm and sable plume,
O'er lance and panoply—like the full moon
When through the storms of black December's night
She, in the east slow-rising, redly breaks,
And gilds the skirts of the dark clouds with gold.
Aloud he call'd to all the harness'd ranks,
Curbing his fiery steeds, and bade them halt
On the war-cumber'd plain. His voice was heard,
Despite of armour clang and martial coil,
From wing to wing, and echoed far and near.
So, when th' infrenzied tempest, wild with rage,
Lashes the groaning forest, if on high
The thunder in its fulness walks abroad,
The discord of the writhing woods is drown'd;
The blust'ring winds, that with such fury storm'd,
Seem into whispers sunk, and naught is heard.

Save the dread peal of Heav'n's artillery,
Repeated through blue ether's airy hall.

The battle-tide no longer onward roll'd;
Thick clouds of dust the host involv'd, and all
Was mutt'ring wonder.

Thus, when o'er the woods
The lightning-kindled flames impetuous rush,
Its torrid course some mighty river stops,
Along whose banks the crackling blaze ascends,
And threat'ning roars to the invaded skies;
But roars in vain, though aided by the winds.
Serene the blue flood smiles, as it reflects
The ruddy fire and sparks that mount aloft,
Yet dare not cross its wat'ry pilgrimage.

Astarotha his herald to him call'd:
Of giant brood was he—Ishbībenob
The warrior's name; to him the prince began:—
“Seest thou yon standard floating in the rear
Of these our legions? By great Dagon's shrine
It is the ensign of that renegade
And fierce bandit who late in woods and caves
Lurk'd from pursuit, with his predat'ry clan,
Prowling at night like wolves and lions fell,
And the defenceless plund'ring!—’Tis that chief
Who oft has bath'd his falchion in the blood,
The noblest blood Philistia's nation boasts.
And shall he then, our greatest foeman, share

The glory of a conquest by our gods
And seers, in prescience skilful, promis'd us
O'er yonder host of Israel? No! I swear
By the bright queen of heav'n, though he has gain'd
The king of Gath's protection, yet the slave
Shall from the ranks this very hour be sent!
Call round me all the chiefs, and hither bring
The regal son of Mäoch!"

His proud lord
Ishbibenob obey'd. Philistia's kings
Throng round th' imperial wain: the prince of Gath
The summons too attended; when in wrath
The prime of dominations and high thrones
With haughty mien began:—

" Say, warlike chief,
Leader of Gath and Rimmon's spearmen bold,
Why floats that hostile banner in thy ranks?
And why dost thou those savage bands permit,
Those pirates of the mountains and the woods,
By birth of Hebrew blood, the battle-field
With thee to enter? seest not on yon hills,
And by that fountain in the dale below,
The army of their king, with whom we hope
Encounter ere the hour of noon to wage?
And wouldst thou then amid thy ranks enlist
Those outlaw'd anarchs, daring renegades,
That serve a chief without or honour, faith,
Or loyalty, who 'mid the fight will turn

His sword against us, and a road cut out
To reconciliation with his prince
Through our divided corse :—

Gath replied :—

“ Chiefs of Philistia’s sea-lav’d country ! know
That, where yon pennon which you hostile call
Floats on the morning winds, David the brave,
The captain of my guards, his dauntless troops
Leads to the fight against his tyrant lord :—
David, whom I’ve adopted as my son ;
To whom I gave the city and the plains
Of Ziklag, there as my viceroy to reign ;
And whom I’ve ever found, e’er since the day
He fled to Gath from the vindictive Saul,—
That sought through envy to destroy the youth
He could not equal in heroic fame,—
In faith and honour, loyalty and zeal,
To me as his protector, to outshine
Those deeds of valour and renown’d emprise
By him perform’d amid the fields of fate.”

Rage flash’d from the Philistian princes’ eyes,
Who stood like brazen pillars round the car
Of great Astarotha, as he exclaim’d—

“ O, king of men, what madness has possess’d
Thy intellectual pow’rs thus to be fool’d
By one who from his early youth has been
Thy country’s foe in council and in field ?
Hast thou forgot that day, O day accurst !—

Let its return be blotted from the year,
The sun forget to gild its gloomy morn,
And sky and earth in sackcloth be array'd,—
When that audacious stripling, whom thou call'st
Thy son by fond adoption, in the vale
Of Elah dar'd to champion to the fray
The steel-encased son of Anak's blood,
The glory and defender of thy land?
Yes, brave my chiefs, this man whom Gath protects
Was that young shepherd who in rustic weeds,
With sling and stone, in sight of both the hosts,
As well ye know, the pride of Anak slew!
Then send him hence, or, by the gods I serve,
This thirsty jav'lin drinks the rebel's blood!"

"Aye, send the villain hence, monarch of men!
Cried Gathrimond the gloomy, "to the place
Thou hast appointed him wherein to rule.
Shall he into the bloody fray descend
With us, ye thrones? No, 'tis his policy
Hither to lead those robbers on the eve
Of battle with his sov'reign, that he may,
'Mid the confusion of the deathful fight,
Fall on our army's rear, and while we face
The foe with rough encounter breast to breast,
His treach'rous falchion bury in our backs!
Thus we, ye chieftains, sons of fame, shall die
The death of cowards, and the traitor snatch
The crown of conquest from the conquerors!"

'Tis by an act like this the anarch hopes

For his unjust rebellion to atone :

Yes ! for the hour of blood and fate this slave

Now pants, that in our life-stream he may steep

His murder-sharpen'd blade, and soothe to peace

The wrathful prince of Jacob's hated tribes

With th' empurpled sacrifice of these our heads

Laid at the tyrant's feet ! They are the price

Of reconciliation which he hopes to pay

To majesty incens'd ! Well may ye frown ;

For sure you cannot have forgot how late

This fell brigand a princess for his bride

Nobly obtain'd, by paying her curs'd sire

A bloody portion of two hundred heads,

Lopt from the shoulders of our nation's chiefs

And bravest warriors : such he trusts to make

Our fate ignoble ere yon sun, that now

Proudly beholds with glare insuff'able

His image in our shields reflected back,

Flings o'er the corse of the mighty, stretch'd

Cold on the battle-plain, his ev'ning ray.

This is the martial youth whose brows were bound

With garlands of renown when he return'd

In triumph from the valley of the slain,

Where fell of Anak's line the prime in war ;

Of whom the virgins and the minstrels sung,

As they to meet him came in dances forth

From all the Hebrew cities, ' Saul hath slain

His thousands, but the valiant David's arm
Has tens of thousands slaughter'd in the field.'
Shall he then, princely chiefs, admitted be
Among our ranks who hath so oft his brand
Steep'd to the hilt in brave Philistine blood,
And from our noblest warriors pluck'd the plumes
Of vict'ry his own haughty crest t' adorn?"

"No!" with one voice the thund'ring host exclaim'd;
"Send him from hence, or die he shall this hour!"

The son of Mäoch frowning turn'd away;
And, lacking power and spirit to resist
Th' imperious princes, now to David came,
Him thus addressing:—

"Hence, my godlike son,
With thy brave bands, and quit these envious ranks;
For I must tell thee that thou art forbid
To join th' impending battle, and debarr'd
From taking just revenge on those thy foes,
Who from one ancient house with thee are sprung."

David replied, "Alas! what have I done
To merit such disgrace, to be dismiss'd
The service of my lov'd and royal lord?
O, I had hop'd this giant brand to flesh
Beneath thy banner with the smoking fat
Of Israel's valiant princes, with the fall
Of yonder foes have sated wild revenge,
And wash'd these hands in my base country's blood!

Beneath the wing of thy protection, I
Had proudly hop'd from exile's gloomy shades
To have diverg'd into the radiant blaze
Of glory, pure and dazzling as the sun!
But farewell all! Since you dismiss me hence,
My honour doubting, flatt'ring hope is false,
And false th' illusive fulgency that beams
Around the hero's plume, as the bright hues
That fade to darkness in an ev'ning sky."

"Offspring of valour! heir to deathless fame!
Of thy dismissal hence blame not thy sire,
Thy patron, and thy friend! O thou to me
In peace and war, in council and in fight,
Hast been my better angel, by thy God
Sent, with a thousand blessings in thy train,
To change my cares to joys! Be not aggriev'd
That thou thy back must turn on yonder foe
In battailous array; our haughty lords
Thy prowess envy in the fields of fate,
And will not suffer thee with them to share
The glory of a conquest: therefore hence;
Return to Ziklag, which to thee I've given,
And to thy sons for ever: go in peace,
My princely boy, ere thou the kings enrage."

"Farewell, O chief, success thy arms attend,
And Heav'n in safety bring thee to thy home!"
Thus saying, David, with his dauntless bands

In order rang'd, disparted from the lines
Of royal Achish, and long ere the noon
Lost sight of Aphek's war-encumber'd plains.

From morn till setting sun the warriors march'd
O'er mountain and o'er moorland, when their feet
The lofty hills achiev'd that overlook
The south of Judah's fair inheritance
To Edom's fertile land. Impatient gaz'd
The soldiers from the wood-clad alpine heigh--
Tow'rd Ziklag's turrets on the distant plain,
Where in th' embrace of nuptial love they long'd
To lose remembrance of their dangers past,
And all the toils of deadly war repay
With ease and dalliance in the bow'rs of peace.
They gaz'd, but—O distracting sight!—the sun
With farewell beam glar'd redly on a heap
Of smoking ruins! Ziklag was no more!
The war-wolves, in their absence at the camp
Of the Philistines, had the city ta'en;
Their wives, their sons and daughters captives made,
And fire and desolation spread o'er all
Those once-proud tow'rs the gift of Mäoch's son!
An universal cry of horror rose
From the distracted warmen and their chiefs,
That mountain-breezes wafted to the clouds!
Each soldier with his eyes the woman play'd,
Till rage the fountain of their tears dried up.

Now through the shades of twilight there appear'd

A mail-accoutred troop with dancing plume,
With gleamy lance and bannerol display'd,
The mountain-heights ascending : but so lost
And swallow'd up in floods of hopeless grief
Were David and his host, that their approach
Was unobserv'd till from his steel-clad lines
Scarce five spears length they stood ; when he perceiv'd
It was no hostile band of rev'ers fell,
But friends of Hebrew blood, now come to share
His glory militant or with him die.

The martial train by captains bold was led,
Who were expert in fight and high in rank
Among the warmen of Manasseh's tribe.
The first in might was Jozabad the tall :
His face was as the lion's when he meets
Fierce with his prey the leopard of the hills.
Gigantic was his glave, and broad the shield
That on his shoulders hung, a ruddy light
Around him casting, the reflection caught
From that celestial radiance of the west
Which linger'd o'er the grave of parted day.
Those whom he brought dwelt in the realms renown'd
Of Bashan, and her fruitful vallies till'd,
Or fell'd the forest oaks that propp'd her skies.
The next were Michael and Zilthai, who came
From Shechem's tow'rs, and where, thro' groves of pine
And sweet florif'rous fields for ever green,
Kamah his silver waves rolls to the sea.

Then follow'd Adnah and his brawny clan
From Megiddo and Endor, who were fam'd
For skill in archery, and casting stones
Amid the heat of battle from their slings.
Now came young Zozabad the golden-hair'd.
His shield was silv'ry gleaming, like the moon
Rolling along a tempest-troubled sky;
His brilliant eyes the western star outshone,
And his fair form perfection's pattern stood
Second to none but David in the host.
Last follow'd Jediahel and Elihu, chiefs
Of Ibleam's ancient city. Darkly stood,
In ebon mail amid the gloom of eve,
These mighty warriors, like two stately tow'rs
Grown black with age on a wild sea-beat rock
Above their helmets' raven plumage wav'd
Their gonfalon, like a bright golden cloud
Expanding on a darksome mountain's brow.
Behind them rose a grove of brazen spears,
Which caught the last expiring purple gleam
That issued from pale twilight's closing eye,
And o'er their visages of warlike cast
Shed radiance tremulous, like yellow rays
Of moonshine falling on a hill of rocks.

But these brave chiefs, as David welcom'd them,
(Though tears seem'd to belie his half-spoke thanks)
Were unregarded by his wailful host
That stood aloof bent o'er their brazen shields,

Half weeping, half blaspheming, cursing some,
And some to Heav'n loud praying for revenge!

What bard shall sing the rage of him that gain'd
An everliving name for deeds of fate?

Benaïah was the dreaded warrior call'd,
Who high in honour stood, though not the prime,
Among the thirty worthies, and was made
The captain o'er young David's chosen guards.
Victorious chief, from Kabzeel's fountful dales,
Where he his father's num'rous flocks and herds,
Like Paris on fam'd Ida's lofty top,
Attended daily when the trumpet's blast
Him summon'd not to warlike fields of fame.

A hungry lion his Herculean arm
O'erpower'd and slew, and with nor glave nor shield
A Memphian hero, of gigantic height
And strength immense, with his own spear dispatch'd.
Dark were this warrior's looks, and dark his plumes;
Not so the steel that cas'd his brawny limbs:
Bright as his eyes that rage with flames illum'd,
His armature shot through the dusky shades
A quiv'ring stream of light, when, from the files
Advancing, he full fiercely thus exclaim'd:—

“Hear me, ye warmen all of Israel's blood,
Whose sighs o'erload the winds, whose tears the ground
Besprinkle thicker than pale ev'ning's dews—
Great cause have we, my brethren brave in arms,
For loud lament; well may you curse your stars,

And all bad angels : but be not deceiv'd ;
Nor stars, nor agency of evil sprites,
This mis'ry could have wrought, but by the aid
Of pride vain-glorious clad in human shape.
Who has betray'd our treasure, dearly bought
With blood and life, of valour the reward,
To a fell band of robbers ? Who has giv'n
Our wives and children up a sacrifice
To lust and murder ? Look on yonder tow'rs,
(If floods of tears have not your vision drown'd)
Of that fair city all which now remain ;
See how, involv'd in smoke and ruddy flame,
With horrid pomp they gild the ev'ning skies !
Behold its palaces, that late were fill'd
With spoils of war, its sumptuous gates, its walls,
A heap of blacken'd ruins are become !
Where in those halls hung gleaming shields of gold,
Banners in battle ta'en, all stiff with gems,
Crowns, robes of purple, and bright suits of mail,
Encircling fires now glow and mount aloft,
Their turrets far o'ertopping ! Heard you not
That dreadful crash ? See ! see ! yon temple's roof
Is sunk in flames ! and now ten thousand sparks
And streamy blazes lighten all the clouds,
As from some burning mountain's smoky top !
Deep vibrate on my ear our children's groans
Beneath the wild bandit's unsparing sword,
As through the streets the fell barbarians rush,

Thirsting for blood, and smear'd with captive gore.
I hear the shrieks of our lov'd virtuous wives
As from the conq'ring ravisher they fly,
But fly in vain! O the distracting sounds!
They drive my soul to madness! urge me now
T' invoke eternal curses on that chief,
Who, to indulge his boundless thirst for fame,
And gratify ambition, left yon fold
With all our tender innocent lambs expos'd
A prey to the ferocious wolves of war,
And join'd with foes against his native land!
Nor stars, nor Heav'n accuse, for yonder stands
The author of our suff'rings! On his head
Pull down the maledictions just of Heav'n,
E'en on your^p trait'rous leader! Yes, ye wrong'd,
This gen'rous David, captain of these bands,
For whom we left our homes and country dear
To follow into banishment, and share
The wayward fortunes of a man proscrib'd,
Is the sole cause of all our hopeless wo!
Why what had we to do with these new wars
Betwixt Philistia and the Hebrew king,
That unprotected we our all should leave
To join a heathen's standard? Man of blood!
Vain-glorious tyrant! hear me: for the hope
Thou shouldst from conquest's wing another plume
Pluck to adorn thy pride-exalted crest,
Our treasure dearly won in hard-fought fields

Thou like a trait'rous villain hast giv'n up
To plund'ring mountaineers! O, faithless chief
Of a most faithful band, thou hast, to win
New palms of vict'ry, and thy brows adorn
With martial wreaths of glory, sacrificed
Our wives and offspring at the blood-stain'd shrine
Of eagle-eyed ambition! Brethren brave,
I read your indignation in those frowns;
Then speak your wrongs aloud—declare what fate
Such a base leader merits at your hands."

"To be exterminated!" cried the host;
"Each draw his sword, and sheath it to the hilt
In his vile heart!"—the tempest of their wrath
Rises in hurly like th' outrageous blasts
Of the fierce Euroclydon rushing thwart
The writhing cedars of mount Lebanon!
Not one of all the bands now forward came
As advocate on his commander's side,
Who firmly stood, amid the threat'ning rout,
Like a tall rock breasting the storm-lash'd sea,
Whose smoking surges, by the wild winds driven,
In thunder on its naked bosom beat,
Till with o'erlabour'd fury they expire."
But, in th' Almighty trusting, David thus
Th' infuriate soldiers, brandishing their swords,
Undauntedly harangued:—

"Ye warriors, chiefs,
What mean these clamours, these rebellious threats?

What have I done to merit such disgrace?
You call me prince, your leader, and your king;
If such I am 'twas ye, my brethren lov'd,
That rais'd me to a station so sublime,
A post of honour gloried I to fill,
Because, whene'er I pointed out the way
To deeds of fair renown in deathful fields,
Not one, that here in panoply array'd
Around me stands, through coward fear shrunk back:
No, by my wrongs, ye all right nobly strove
In duty militant and martial fire
Each other to surpass: when from its sheath
My battle-glave I drew, and led you forth
To make reprisals on our country's foes,
Not one that fills these ranks, with weapon bare
And pointed at my breast, but then, inspir'd
With temper'd courage such as heroes feel,
On tiptoe stood to hear the trumpet sound
The signal for the onset. Fought we have
Together side by side, and bravely fought,
I' th' jaws of death and danger; on our swords,
That 'smok'd with torrents hot of foemen's blood,
Sat vict'ry clad in flames, and round our brows
Glory triumphant her bright laurels bound.
But that is past—and now, when Heav'n and fate
Adversity have on us rain'd, you blame,
Nay execrate and curse, your hapless chief,
And say 'tis his ambition that has pull'd

This weight of wo upon your ill-starr'd heads :
And do ye owe your mis'ry to my pride ?
Alas ! I own my pride too great has been ;
For O, so much I've gloried to be call'd
Your captain in the field, to lead you on
In battailous array, where hosts of foes,
Outnumb'ring thrice your fearless numbers, stood
The charge awaiting of your close-wedg'd files,
To mark your matchless deeds of hardiment,
And view each single worthy squadron's chase,
That I would not have parted from my band
T' have been o'er half the kingdoms of the globe
Created monarch !—But no more of this.—
Since me you deem the author of your woes,
Dispatch at once, and end your suff'rings here !
Behold, this war-scarr'd bosom I now bare
To your revengeful swords : no more delay,
But haste your threaten'd wrath to execute,
For I cannot one hour endure t' outlive
My brother warriors' love, with whom so oft
I've fought and bled, have fame and conquest won !——
Why rush ye not at once upon me here,
And in my body bury those bright points ?
These veins have blood enough to colour all
The thirsty weapons that revenge hath drawn :
And yet, methinks, of pity now your looks
Bear more the semblance than of murd'rous rage.
Well may they speak compassion—for what man

Among your steel-clad ranks can now declare
That he in this destruction of our all
More than his leader suffers? Who that here
Hath lost what the high valour of his arm
Won bravely in the field, his noble spoil
Of vanquish'd citics taken from the foe,
His captive damsels and refulgent robes,
The meed of vict'ry, is a greater loser
Than his ill-fated prince? Who is there here
That hath the partner of his anxious soul,
His dear-lov'd wife, and helpless children lost,
Whose heart weeps tears of blood as he reflects
Upon their unknown doom, feels greater wo
Than wretched David? Heav'n alone can tell
What at this hour of trial he endures!
O, I have lost, perchance for ever lost,
Two lovely wives on whom my ardent soul
Doated with fondness inexpressible!
Two cherub babes that, with their mothers, lie
Perhaps amid yon rolling sea of flames
To cinders scorch'd! or writhing in their gore
On the red point of some fell bord'rer's lance!
No more of that, or grief will choke me quite;
These tears but ill become the warrior now.—
My brethren in distress, O, I can judge
Your feelings by my own, and from my soul
Forgive that rage which in its frenzy bared
Those gleaming brands, and to this naked breas

Again invite their points, for I am grown
Weary of life, since deeper sunk am I
In misery superlative than is
The lowest in your ranks ; while on my head
A thousand horrid maledictions fall,
And push me down beyond the reach of hope."

"Live ! live !" loud shouted all the tearful bands,
From rage to pity soften'd, "noble chief,
Our prince, our king ! where is the envious wretch,
That spitefully such faultless worth accus'd ?
Drag, drag him forth ! our swords his heart shall pierce."

As when, from the cisalpine forests driv'n
By snow-rob'd winter, a grim troop of wolves
Fasten fierce-howling on a noble bull,
Who struggles to the last, besmear'd with gore,
So on Benaïah the stern soldiery fell,
With fury pitiless : in vain he gnash'd
His teeth with spite, and wrestled hard and long.
O'erpower'd by numbers, to the earth he sunk,
And never more from thence had ris'n, for now
A thousand swords were at his bosom aim'd,
And fatal would their deadly stabs have prov'd,
But for the gen'rous David ; he, to save
His fallen foe, rush'd through the battling crowd ;
And, at the very crisis of his fate,
Himself threw on the chieftain, and preserv'd
With godlike aid an enemy from death,
Exclaiming thus aloud —

“ Hold—brethren, friends !
Not for the wide dominion of the globe,
On my account shall ye this day distain
Those angry weapons with a brother's gore.
If ye, through a mistaken fury, slay
This son of might, in acts of wide renown
Your kinsman as in blood, that hour I swear,
By the eternal Majesty of Him
Who dwells betwixt the sacred cherubim,
No more to be your leader ! ne'er again
Communion or sweet fellowship to hold
With you amid the glorious strife of arms !
No more on hard-won fields the shout I'll raise
Of vict'ry which the weary warrior cheers ;
No, nor the martial song of triumph swell
In the full banquet hall or festive bow'r,
With you whom I have my compeers esteem'd
In valour, honour, and immortal fame ;
But, from the busy world and all its cares
Withdrawing, to some lonely cell repair
Amid the trackless desert's gloomy shades,
And ne'er revisit more the haunts of men.
What ! shall the warrior sons of one brave line
Each other murder for a few rash words,
Spoke from a heart with bitt'rest anguish wrung
In tribulation's irrespective hour ?
Ne'er let such infamy your honour stain,
Ye princes of the brave ; but be in mind,

As in the bloody field, magnanimous,
And in compassion, attribute of God,
All other men of fam'd emprise transcend
Far as your cavalier exploits outshine
Their brightest fame and glory : then, my friends,
Shall ye for ever live in deathless song
The tuneful minstrel's pride, and be to chiefs
Th' example high in ages yet unborn,
As to th' inspired harper's lay they list
At vict'ry's martial festival convok'd,
And hear the chiming strings ring with the tale
Of your achievements in the battle-field :
Then shall some future bard, in times remote,
The story of this ev'ning's feud recite,
That from his hearers' eyes the tears will draw
Of approbation and refin'd delight,
To learn how you each other's faults forgave,
As tend'rest brothers of one mother born,
And, to their sheaths returning your keen blades,
In fond embraces all your anger lost.—
Put up those swords !—Obey, or to my heart
Strike all their points at once ! 'Tis my command !
Aye, now again you are my noble band !
And, since your actions pardon speak to all,
I am once more your leader proud to be.”

David his hand to fall'n Benaïah gave
In token of forgiveness : the stern chief,
By such exalted goodness overwhelm'd,

No utterance found for words. Down his dark cheek
Roll'd the big tear, which deep contrition spoke ;
Upon the bosom of his godlike prince
The scalding drops now fell, and with them sunk
The warrior, hiding in his leader's arms
His shame-encrimson'd face ; while all around
To friendship and to peace alike inclin'd.

So the fierce ruffian winds the deep deform,
And bid old ocean lift his waves on high,
To split the hapless bark on some rude rock
Which the resurging breakers oft o'erleap
With thund'ring roar, and clouds of smoke-like foam ;
Anon th' exhausted tempest sinks to rest,
The winds expire, the blue serene appears ;
'Twixt the retiring storms of sable hue
The sun looks smiling out, just o'er the verge
Of wavy ocean, and a golden flood
Of glory spreads on all the wild profound,
That seems another radiant sky below,
A thousand hues reflecting, while ashore
The weary shipwreck'd seaboy on a spar,
Rent from the shatter'd fragments of his ship,
Is by the should'ring billows safely borne.
Cloudless the firmamental blue appears,
Richly emboss'd with ever-glitt'ring stars,
Save where, far off, from Ziklag's burning tow'rs
Thick columns black of smoke, that bick'ring flames
At intervals emit, now roll aloft,

Dark'ning the wide horizon : in the east
The changeful moon, sweet empress of the skies,
In full refulgence rises ; o'er her face
A crimson blush appears, like damsel fair
When by admiring crowds first gaz'd upon :
Touch'd by her wizard ray, a landscape new
Springs up to light, in magic col'ring deck'd
Beyond the painter's art to imitate.
Silver the mountain seems, and silver all
The warbling brooklets and the wav'ring floods,
Wherein from her high throne night's peerless queen
With conscious pride her charms reflected views,
That dim each varied sign around the pole.
The grove, as to the whisp'ring wind it bows,
A shade o'er all its sleeping flow'rets casts,
Bedropp'd with golden spangles ; not a sound
Strikes on the ear, save the far-distant howl
Of hungry wolf, or scream of flitting bird
Gilding his plumage with reflected light.
“ Bring hither,” David to Abiathar cries,
“ Our oracle divine, that we may learn
What God will for us do.” The priest obey'd,
And to his chief the sacred ephod brought,
Who thus his pray'r began :—

“ O, thou who reign'st
Supreme in heav'n and earth, great King of kings,
Eternal God of gods, shall I pursue

These spoilers, who our peaceful fold have robb'd,
And from us ta'en our all?"

Scarce had he spoke
When o'er the sky a gloomy darkness roll'd,
That star and moonbeam hid: deep thunders shook
The seated hills, and sounds unearthly woke
The hollow echoes of the caves and woods,
While blue-wing'd lightnings with incessant blaze
Inwapt th' affrighted heav'ns. From the black north
A whirlwind rush'd, with noise loud as the roar
Of twice ten thousand chariots when they shake
The field with dread encounter; on its wings
A glowing cloud of fire sublimely rode:
Purple and amber, sapphire, gold and green,
Were its celestial tints; amidst it shone
Brightness unspeakable! from whence stream'd forth
A flood of glory that no mortal eye
Could gaze upon and live!

And now a voice,
Loud as the thunder of that dreadful trump
Which from old Sinai's flame-encircled top
Spread terror and dismay through all the camp
Of wand'ring Israel, thus was heard to say:—

“Light of my people, my anointed prince,
Son after my own heart, arise, and lead
Thy follow'rs on to vict'ry: by thy side
My angel ever stands in danger's hour,

From evil thee to shield; my furbish'd sword,
Sharpen'd for slaughter, glitters in thy front,
Borne by the king of terrors!—On, my son!
Pursue the robbers and recover all."

The voice was heard no more, the thunder ceas'd,
And Heav'n's immortal brightness pass'd away;
The moon shone with recover'd lustre forth,
And shouts, than sounds the fulness of the deep
Far louder, broke from all the joyful bands,
As David forward bade them march, to make
A just surreption on the plund'ring foe.

Now the pursuit commenc'd. To Besor's stream
Their chief the mailed files light-hearted led:
Around his head a brilliant glory shone,
Not like the beam of day, or the quick flash
Of azure lightnings, but an amber glow
Of stedfast fulgency that sham'd the stars!
His armour seem'd in flames, and show'd the path
The dazzling warrior trod; his lucid shield
Reflected shadowy forms, whose radiant skirts
The greensward lightly swept, and in the winds
Ærial music sounded; that inspir'd
Heroic confidence; before him mov'd
The angel dread of death, arm'd with the sword
Of great Jehovah! his terrific eye
Had turn'd the moon to blood, made all the lamps
Of heav'n start from their spheres, and his red brand,
Which far the cherubims at Eden's port

In burning flames outflam'd, set earth on fire,
But that impervious darkness wrapt its wings
About the awful vision !

On the banks
Of Besor's silver flood, that through his vales
Meanders in wild mazes, wearied sunk
Two hundred of the brave band's cuirassiers,
Unable to proceed ; but David, fir'd
With ardour to revenge his wrongs, nor droop'd;
Nor languor felt, but onward march'd till morn.

Meantime the roving pirates on a plain,
As ev'ning clos'd her eye, their white tents rais'd,
And feasted with their captives. Rich in spoil,
They gave a loose to revelry and mirth,
Filling the air with laughter, song, and shout.
The scene of their encampment was a dale
By mountain brooklets water'd, ever clear
As th' ethereal they reflected : green its lawns
And islets, pranked with ever-blooming flow'rs.
Soft wav'ring airs, from orange groves and beds
Of Gilead's fragrant balm, awoke to fan
The warriors as they indolently lay
On purple couches in their shield-hung tents ;
While captive damsels, as the Graces fair,
To tales of love the harp and lute attun'd.
Elysian roses damask'd all the shades
That border'd a pure river, whose blue waves
For ever roll'd in music tunable

Along these happy plains ; its yellow sands
Were bright as gold, and all its verdant banks
With purple vi'lets sprinkled : there reclines
The pensive pris'ner, gazing on the flood
With tear-swoll'n eye, to mark th' enlighten'd cloud,
Reflected in the crystalline below,
Pass swiftly o'er the moonbeam, while he sighs
For wings as fleet t' escape captivity.

Beneath the fig-tree and pomegranate's shade
Alzarab, chief of the freebooters, rears
His proud pavilion : crimson curtains line
The gorgeous tent, deck'd with the richest spoils.
A hundred bucklers of Ophirian gold,
A hundred helmets with their varied plumes,
Robes blazing bright with gems, rich swords and spears,
Adorn its ample hangings ; the gay front
Drawn up the balmy breeze of eve t' admit,
Yields an Arcadian prospect to the eye ;
On the soft flow'r-enamell'd green appear,
'Neath an arcade of blowing woodbine sweet,
Myrtle and nard enwoven, jocund troops
Of beauteous youths, and maids as Hebe fair,
Forming the festive dance, while harp and lute
The green woods fill with echoed harmony,
And o'er their heads the shadowy queen of heav'n,
Walking in all her brightness, round them sheds
A flood of light caught by the stream beyond,
With all the magic landscape, as it glows,

Of waving groves and bow'rs, of glitt'ring arms,
Of blazon'd bannerol, of snow-white tent,
And passing warrior in refulgent mail,
Till on the pleasing scene th' enamour'd moon
Such sweet enchantment flings, that it now seems
Fairy illusion, or Hesperian chimes.

High in the midst of his pavilion sat
Alzarab, on a Tyrian couch of state :
Before him was display'd an ample feast
Of richest delicacies ; fruits and flow'rs,
Yielding delicious odours, smil'd around,
While splendid goblets, and capacious bowls
Emboss'd with precious gems, were to the brim
Fill'd with the grape's invigorating blood.
Beside him on imperial seats were plac'd
His martial chiefs, in robes of splendid dyes
Embroider'd deep with gold and glitt'ring stones.
Crowds of attendants wait their prince's nod,
And heap with luxury the groaning board.
An herald now he calls, and bids him bring
His two fair captives, David's beauteous wives,
His prize by right of arms : and much he lov'd
The noble Abigail, who enter'd now
With fair Ahinoam their pleas'd captor's tent.

“ Princesses fair, welcome !” Alzarab cried ;
“ Come, and the regal banquet with me share :
Here on this golden couch by my right hand,
In pomp such as beseems those peerless charms,

The festive table grace. By yon bright star,
The worshipp'd queen of heav'n, I hold not all
These splendid treasures pil'd around my tent,
Not all yon num'rous flocks and beeves that feed
By those clear fountains, nor the captive slaves
Who live but on my breath, the valued spoils
I and these dauntless chiefs in fight have won
From Israel and Phenicia's warlike land,
So estimable half as thou, fair prize.
My matchless Abigail, give me thy love,
And be the queen of all thine eyes behold."

"Give thee my love, thou plundering mountaineer,
That colour'st with the noble deeds of arms
Thy conflagrations and vile robberies!
What! shall I leave a husband's sacred arms,
On whom my soul with holy fondness doats,
For the pollution of thy foul embrace,
A heathen and a murd'rer? Shall I leave
The tender bosom of a godlike prince,
The destin'd king of great Jehovah's sons,
A true-born hero, heir to a renown
Bright as yon stars, eternal as the heav'ns,
For a base nameless rover, a brigand,
Who like a thief stole on our peaceful home
When its defender, its heroic prince,
Was gone far off to battle, as he knew
Full well, or, coward like, he had not dar'd
T' approach the gates of Ziklag? Still I see

Thy rage resistless spreading flames around,
Slaying the few that dar'd thy pow'r oppose,
And tumbling on our heads the palace walls!
Scarce could I from the fiery deluge save
My shrieking infant—but, marauding chief,
The hour of vengeance comes! Soon will my lord,
My conq'ring hero, thee o'ertake, and dip
His retributive falchion in thy blood!
Soon will these scenes of high festivity
Be chang'd to fields of carnage red with gore—
These sounds to shrieks and howling! Soon thy eye,
That flashes with such brightness, shall be sunk
In everlasting night! Soon thou the ground
Beneath the sword of my victorious lord.

With groans shalt bite, and lift thy shield no more

“Imperious dame, thou dost the heroine play
With grace inimitable,” cried the chief.

“Thy spirit charms me, but thy prophecies
I give the winds, and laugh at all thy threats.
How anger heightens those supernal charms!
Gives to thine eye the lightning, to thy cheek
The sweet vermilion of the summer's morn.
Bright goddess, I adore thee! thou shalt be,
Spite of thyself, blest in my love, and reign
The idol of my homage: from thy breast
Thy David banish; him no more shalt thou
On earth behold! on the war-cover'd plain
Far hence his buckler lies; yon moonbeams gild

His gory pillow ; stripp'd of his bright mail,
He sleeps in blood, cold as his brazen spear,
On earth's red lap 'mid mountains of the slain,
While o'er him howl the wolf and hungry bear !
Forget him then, forget thy country too,
And dwell with us ; all pleasures, all delights
The heart can think on, wing our joyous hours,
And strew our paths with roses ; freedom's sons,
We roam at large, and find in ev'ry land
Luxuriant plenty, treasures ever new.
Nor poverty nor meagre abstinence
Reside with us : look on these blissful scenes,
This sumptuous banquet, which the gods themselves
Might share without disgrace. This, this is wealth,
Pomp, rapture, empire, pow'r unlimited !
The world is our's without or toil or care,
The sword our sceptre, plunder our domains.
Sound the loud clarion, strike the harp and lute,
Shout to the skies the triumph of our might,
Pour from those silver flagons richest wines,
Then all Arabia's odours round us fling.
Drink deep, ye warrior chiefs, to pleasure drink,
And large libations pour to blissful love ;
Beauty this night our festive joys shall crown
With full fruition of its heav'nly charms."

All on a sudden sounded far and near
A thousand cries and horrid shrieks of death,
Drowning the clarion, harp, and mellow flute !

Fear blanch'd Alzarab's cheek, the goblet fell
Untasted from his hand, amazement seiz'd
The bacchanalian rout, the maids and youths
That led the sportive dance stood fix'd and pale,
As did the spouse of Lot when she, to Zoar
For refuge flying, cast a look behind!
Dumb-struck was laughter, mirth with fright expir'd :
For now the work of slaughter was begun
By David and his bands among the sons
Of riot and direption ; from the hills
He rush'd upon them with his deadly brand,
And their carousals turn'd to groans and death !

So from th' internal sunbeat mountains wild
Of Afric's sultry clime, with eyes of fire,
The spotted leopard, mercilessly fierce,
Descends on the gregarious herds that spread
Innum'rous o'er the rich florif'rous lawns
And meads luxuriant of fair Guinea's land :
In vain they fly, the savage monster springs
On his devoted prey, drinks its hot blood,
And his carniv'rous jaws deep-sanguin'd crams
With quiv'ring flesh torn from the reeking bones.

Surprize and fear the festive robbers robb'd
O' th' pow'r of opposition ; down they fell
Before the Hebrew warriors, as a field
Of grass before the mower ; heaps on heaps
Lay roll'd in gore together ; death usurp'd
The rosy seat of tipsy revelry,

And ev'ry grove of cinnamon and palm,
That late to the young Syrian damsel's song,
To viol, lute, to theorbo, and harp,
So sweetly echoed, fill'd with screams and groans.
No time was now their radiant mail to don
For young Alzarab or his frightened chiefs;
They fled the gay pavilion—fled, and left
Their treasure all behind!

Not far from thence

Was an extensive lawn; its sav'ry herbs
A crowd of camels cropp'd: thither now hied
The pirate cavaliers, casting their robes
Of cumbrous gold and tissue from their backs,
And, mounting the fleet-footed beasts, across
Idumea's plains swift as the lightning scour'd.

Scarce had they left the tent ere Jesse's son,
Blazing in glorious arms all sanguine-stain'd,
Appear'd before the entrance. So, sublime
In radiant mail outsparkling summer suns,
The angel stood to Hosea's view confess'd
Beyond the floods of Jordan. Tears of joy
Illum'd the azure eyes of Abigail
And fair Ahinoam, as they sunk o'erjoy'd
Upon his breast, as they beheld his spear
Flash through captivity's oppressive gloom
With rays of blest deliv'rance—like the gleams
Of a tall watch-tow'r on some surge-beat height,
Guiding the seaboy o'er the starless deep,

'Mid storms and darkness to the wish'd-for port.
No time was there for words ; each soldier clasp'd
His wife and children in his steel-clad arms,
Then flew to share the plunder, for the work
Of death was ended !

Thick as droop its flow'rs
By crimson dew's oppress'd, the groaning vale
With carcasses is strew'd, and to the morn
That now uplifts her purple eyelid smokes
On ev'ry side with blood !

O, beauteous vale,
How art thou chang'd ! in all thy blooming pride
So late the haunt of spring and her lov'd train,
Now o'er thee spreads the shadow of his wing
The angel dark of death ! Flowing with gore
Are thy Arabian groves, their odours chang'd
To horrid stench ; thy river waves are stain'd
With purple torrents, and with corpses chok'd ;
The hideous wolf thy tenant is become,
The warrior-spectre grimly haunts thy shades,
Scaring the nightingale for ever thence,
For thou art with the life-stream of the slain
Made drunk, and with the fat of horsemen gorg'd.
Canesent heaps of mould'ring bones are pil'd
Around thy bow'rs, and mossy skulls that fright
The winking moon with grinning ; long shall they
A terror be to the bandit who roves
The border coast for prey.

The flocks, the herds,
And all the various spoil magnificent
From sundry lands by these freebooters ta'en,
Collected, David with his warmen brave,
His many captive damsels, and his wives,
On the aceldema, loud-shouting, turn'd
Their backs, and Ziklag's tow'rs dismantled sought.

So, when prolific smiles the summer sun
Casts on the teeming earth, th' aculeate bees
A winged army send to roam the woods,
The lawns and groves, that all their blooming pomp
Proudly to the young morning's eye display :
The lily of the vale, the damask rose,
Whose virgin blushes are fair Flora's pride ;
The balmy woodbine, purple hyacinth,
The sweet narcissus wash'd in golden dew,
The yellow primrose, the carnation bud,
The violet blue and July's crimson flow'r,
With all the gay and painted tribes that deck
Th' enamell'd field, heath, moor, and mountain wild,
Alike of their delicious sweets are robb'd
By th' industrious horde, who to their waxen cells
Return ere sun-set, loaded rich with spoils.

THE ROYAL MINSTREL.

BOOK XII.

THE ARGUMENT.

The grand battle on mount Gilboa—Saul's army is routed—he falls on his sword and dies—Jonathan and his brothers are slain—Michal is taken by an Amalekitish prince, and condemned to be sacrificed to Moloc—she is delivered by an angel, and led to the palace of David—their mutual joy at meeting, and grief for the death of Saul and Jonathan—the descent of God to David—the funeral of the king and his sons—David's splendid coronation.

THE ROYAL MINSTREL.

BOOK XII.

Now on the plain beneath mount Gilboa's top,
As frightened morn awoke, the trumpet's blast,
Presageful of the iron storm of war,
The heroes call'd to arms. Up from his couch
Rose the wild-visag'd Saul, and his strong limbs
In rattling harness cas'd: a casque he wore
Of polish'd steel; around it shone in gold
Deeds of the leaders fam'd of Israel's tribes;
Beneath its crimson plumes, that on the winds
So brightly wav'd as ev'ning's glowing clouds
Circling the throne of Phœbus, blaz'd the crown,
Beset with starry gems; his cuirass gleam'd
With golden scales, on which a lion, wrought
In precious stones, just emblem of the heart
That burn'd beneath, fill'd with heroic fire,
Terrific beams reflected to the sky;
His greaves were brass, his cuishes bright as flame;
And from a belt, damask'd with glaring gold,

Across his puissant thigh his broadsword hung ;
Its sheath was sparkling as the rays of Sol
Streaming betwixt the clouds on liquid floods ;
His robes, of Tyrian dye and needlework,
Embroider'd were with silver and with pearls,
Like to a sunny brook circling a field
Empurpled with sweet blossoms ; but o'er all
To the now rising sun his buckler flam'd,
And round him a refulgent glory cast :
Upon its orb, in all his terrors clad,
Was death's destroying angel dark pourtray'd,
Smiting the first-born sons of Egypt's land.
Thus arm'd, the warlike monarch o'er the field,
On which the prince of day doth look askance,
Stalks proudly, gleaming from afar, like clouds
Round whose dark skirts the sheeted lightning plays.
But ah, despair sits on his low'ring brow !
Yet courage resolute, unconq'erable,
His dauntless bosom fires, and in his gear,
For fight prepar'd, the kingly hero shines
Invincible to fear. Hot with revenge,
Eager to dare his fate, he calls aloud
To all his legions ; bids his captains set
The battle in array, shaking his spear,
That glitters like a meteor's waving light
Where northern mountains with th' horizon blend.
Scarce had his voice re-echoed through the host,
That rank on rank mov'd forward, like the clouds

Of black'ning winter, fraught with hail and roll'd
Successive by the blast along the skies,
Ere he his lovely daughter Michal met.
Phaltier, her second lord, had to the camp,
When he, with the stout warmen of his tribe,
The army of the Hebrew monarch join'd,
The princess brought, with all her damsel train.
Her arms around the king she threw, and wept
A flood of tears upon his mailed breast.
Grief dimm'd the regal warrior's faded eye;
And fear, not for himself but his lov'd child,
Assail'd his heavy heart. The spectre's words
Like a deep knell vibrated on his ear,
And a foreboding told him he no more
His tender daughter's warm embrace should feel.
With all a father's speechless fondness he
Close to his steely armour Michal press'd ;
He kiss'd her tearful cheek, and would have cried
' Farewell, my dearest child ! ' but trumpets drown'd
Th' unfinish'd sentence, and his parting sigh
Was lost in the repeated shouts which rose
From those encircling ranks that he came forth
To marshal to the fray. The princess turn'd,
With pray'rs to heav'n for her brave sire's success,
Mournful to her pavilion ; and the king,
Half hoping, half despairing, tow'rd the edge
Of wrathful battle onward mov'd, and cheer'd
His entilades to fight. Both armies greet

The gath'ring storm of war with clang'rous din,
Outrageous for the onset. Now begins
The conflict's bellowing roar ! The banners wave,
The swordmen close, ten thousand falchions gleam,
And clash harsh thunder.—'Tis the voice of death !
A thousand wounds spout blood, and o'er the plain
A crimson deluge flows ; innum'rous groans
Swell on the passing winds, and, mingling deep
With the dread sound of arms, o'erpow'r the tones
Symphonious of the battle's minstrelsy.
The fatal arrows o'er each army fly,
And darken all the air. On burning wheels,
That mingle dust and gore, and bleeding limbs,
A host of chariots rush ; their horrid clang
The soul-inspiring trumpet's music drowns.
As when across an alpine forest sweeps
The wild tornado's lightning-plumed wing,
The sturdy pines before th' impetuous gust
Bow low, then back their branches toss in air,
And with tremendous roar heav'n's concave fill,
While o'er their rocks abrupt the neighb'ring floods,
Dash'd by the howling storm, augment the din ;
Such and so loud the noise of battle-cars
And foaming steeds breaking the long-stretch'd line,
Till, overturn'd by adverse squadrons firm,
Steeds, charioteer, and chariot, roll in blood !

Into the thickest fray, with thunder cloth'd,
Forward the war-horse now his rider bears ;

Snorting, he eyes with scorn the glitt'ring spear,
His feet, deep stain'd in gore, he rears aloft,
While clouds of dust and smoke around him rise
And, plunging through the piles of shields and helms
Commingled with the corse of the slain,
Undaunted meets his fate, and as he dies
Mixes the blood of heroes with his own!
Battalion on battalion furious rush,
Breast meets to breast, and shield encounters shield;
The clamour of their battle-instruments
And brazen wheels resounds o'er all the plain,
Like to a host of candent thunderbolts
O'erwhelming in wild rage a grove of oaks.
Now down triumphant Death, with hideous grin,
On his pale war-steed, mows whole ranks at once.
Down falls the shiver'd lance, down falls the spear,
And dead and dying, heap'd in mountain piles,
Th' ensanguin'd field o'erspread. But yonder see,
Amid the blaze of shields, and dust, and roar,
How the red brand of Saul hot smokes with blood!
Each stroke it gives is death! Despair hath fill'd
His burning soul with more than mortal rage;
Through all th' opposing ranks that him enround,
He, like a tempest rob'd in blackest night,
With thunders arm'd, and wing'd with flakes of fire,
Cuts his corse-cover'd way, till all aloof
The grim battalions fight, and he alone
Stands unoppos'd 'mid the blood-reeking wreck!

Mark how, surrounded by the storm of war,
Blazing in arms full terribly sublime,
He eyes the conflict, whose tremendous roar
Sounds dreadful as Gutpurba's ample floods,
Where, rolling o'er their mountain rocks, they form
A cataract, the wonder of the east.
But long the king stood not with waving sword
Unmet by adverse foe, for now appear'd
Philistine Harpath, styl'd th' invincible :
Of giant race is he, and o'er the dead
And dying strides with eye of deathful wrath ;
Dark is his visage, and his fury wild
E'en as the tempests that along the shores
Of Scandinavia howl through the long gloom
Of dismal winter, and with frozen show'rs
Of marble hail the horrid deserts lash.
High in the air each chieftain waves his brand,
And glories thus to meet. The royal Saul
Seems now to be a match for hell itself ;
While his mad courage on rough danger's surge
Rides dauntless as the sea-bird when she mounts
The storm-heav'd wave, and reckless hears the roar.
Their falchions ring upon each other's shields
A dreadful war-note ; like the rapid gleams
Of quiv'ring lightning from two thunder-clouds
That front to front rude adverse winds have push'd,
Their broadswords flash at ev'ry dreadful stroke ;
The fiends of darkness in their terrors ride

On storms and whirlwinds through the deathful field ;
And Nisroch, fellest of the demons fell,
Gives tenfold vigour to stout Harpath's arm,
Who now asunder breaks the sword of Saul :
The shiver'd blade falls ringing to the ground,
And the Philistine, of his conquest sure,
Another stroke aims at the wary king,
To end the fatal strife ! But Saul the brave,
Retreating nimbly backward, shuns the blow,
And, from his armour-bearer snatching now
His pond'rous jav'lin, rushes on his foe,
And 'twixt the joints of his war-harness drives
Its steel-bright point deep through his tortur'd side !
A dark-red torrent gushes from the wound
Of th' expiring giant as he sinks to earth,
And the bright bosses of his buckler stains.

Th' exulting monarch sought again the fight :
And now he met—swift flying o'er the plain,
With broken ranks disorder'd by the foe,
Whose chariots and fierce horsemen on their rear
Press'd hard—a whole division of the tribe
Of Issachar, whose hardy chief was fall'n.
The presence of their king, and his exploits,
Inspir'd them with fresh courage : his sole arm
The fury of the fell Philistines stay'd.
As a huge mountain by an earthquake cast
Across the passage of a boist'rous flood,
So singly stopp'd the king the foaming steeds

And chariots of th' o'erwhelming enemy ;
Till those who fled on their pursuers turn'd,
And vict'ry e'en from the victorious snatch'd !
Glad shouts of triumph rang through the wide field,
Though partial was the conquest, yielding joy
To all the Hebrew host that heard the sound.

Here onward in his car, all gore-besmeared,
Drove Gathrimond ; his foaming steeds were bath'd
In sweat and blood ; his jav'lines flew around
Like heav'n's flame-circled bolts, and brought to earth
Zarazad, Salma, Hephher, and the prince
Of Naphtali, Hammoleketh the strong !
Zabad of Zebulun then face to face
He met in dread encounter ; but thy spear,
Stern Gathrimond, now fail'd to pierce the shield
Of dauntless Zabad, whose tall jav'lin reach'd
Through all thy plated armour thy great heart,
That o'er the chariot wheels its life-tide pour'd
In purple torrents as thou to the ground
Fell'st, heav'n blaspheming !

Zabad, mighty prince,

Stay'd not to seize the spoil, but onward rush'd,
And in his strength Almana, Abdoma,
Poratha, Dalphon, and Adalia slew !
Then Azrikam, fierce as the leopard springs
On the young lordly stag, the forest's pride,
Seizing the streamy plumes of Gola, dragg'd
The youthful warrior from his glitt'ring car :

In vain he sued for life, the Israelite
With his keen blade asunder clave the helm
His foeman wore, and mingled blood and brains
Gush'd from the yawning skull !

Next Omraz fell,

Then Gershom, Iddo, Zadok, Shimrath, Zur,
And Eshbaal, regal warrior, from the loins
Of Israel's monarch sprung, all by the hand
Of dauntless Zior, strongest of the strong !

But see prince Jonathan : from wing to wing
He flies, inspiring confidence and hope ;
Thunder his voice, his brand the lightning's flash !
Amid the thickest of the fray is seen
His broad glave waving o'er his glitt'ring casque,
As on he leads the cohorts to the charge.
Wonders on either side are now perform'd,
And deeds of fame achiev'd, that long shall live
Green in the minstrel's song. There firmly stands,
Like a dark rock above the swelling flood,
Abner, that vet'ran chief of Israel's host,
Hemm'd by his phalanx, which amid the shock
Of charging ranks impenetrable fights :
Against him are oppos'd two mailed lords,
Ekron and Alzirab ; their chariots they
And steeds with thunder-armed necks drive hard
The bucklers of his valiant band against,
But drive in vain. As mountain surges break
On the rough bosom of the cloud-capt cliff,

And, back recoiling, spent with rage expire ;
So, at each charge the proud Philistines made,
The dauntless Abner nobly stood his ground,*
Till they, disorder'd and repuls'd, fell back,
Strewing th' encrimson'd plain with carcasses !

Black as the midnight storm, and fierce as stalks
The hungry tiger thwart th' Hyrcanian plains,
Doëg, well-pleas'd to view the work of death,
Moves ever foremost in the dreadful strife :
His height is like the cedar's, and his strength
Vast as the oaks of Bashan ; round him swells
The shouting of the battle, and the sound
Of the hoarse trumpet. Tumult at his side,
With slaughter, take their stand ; while by his arm
Sheshai and Hazor, Rimmon, Eshtemah,
Bizjoth and Eglon, mighty chiefs, are slain.
Now from his war-horse the grim Edomite
With force Herculean princely Ishmach drags,
But fail'd to pierce with his well-temper'd blade
The prince's armour : from the wounded side
Of an expiring warrior now he wrench'd
A steely jav'lin of gigantic size,
And, as young Ishmach sprung from earth and rais'd
His shining buckler, through the sounding orb
And through the scaly breastplate sent the lance,
That tore his bosom, and the quiv'ring heart
Pierc'd to the core !

Shahazima beheld

The prince's fall, and vow'd to be reveng'd
For one he dearly lov'd. Forward he rush'd,
Aiming his pond'rous spear at Doëg's head.
The steel fell lightly on the iron targe
Of the mail'd Edomite; then sword to sword
Met the fierce combatants: the fearful shock
Of their encounter was as when deep floods,
Adown the mountains rolling, push aside
The rocks that would their headlong passage bar.
Twice on his knees Shahazima was beat,
And twice the chief recover'd; when, to aid
The wizard warrior, Satan, and a troop
Of hellish fiends, the ghostly forms assum'd
Of slain Abimelech and all his sons!
From a flame-circled cloud, in terrors clad,
They burst at once on Doëg's tortur'd sight!
His arm dropp'd nerveless, from its loosen'd grasp
The sword fell to the ground, while at one blow
Shahazima, by magic aided, clave
The guilty, trembling murd'rer to the chine!

Thick show'rs of stones, by Israel's slingers cast,
Darken the sky, and strange encounter make
With adverse flight of jav'lins and of darts
Loud hurtled through the air, mingled with storms
And hell-form'd thunders, canopying the hosts
That cope in dismal gloom. Abinadab
And Malchishua, youthful princes, fair
As morning's op'ning beam, blooming as spring,

Pride of their royal father, with their guards
From the left wing of Israel's army rush'd:
Impetuous as the thunderbolt, they force
A blood-mark'd passage to the centre, wher
Astarotha, Philistia's prime of chiefs,
His flow'r of warriors leads. The earthquake's course,
Amid a city crown'd with sumptuous tow'rs
And palaces august, is not more dread,
Nor track of Etna's red disgorged streams,
Pushing their horrid Phlegetonian waves
Of boiling pitch and brimstone wrapt in flames
Through orange groves and blest Sicilian vales,
Till the fair landscape, that like Eden smil'd,
Becomes a smoking desert, fire-consum'd,
More fatal than the progress of these youths
Through the Philistine files of battle-cars
And enfilades of horse. See, how they fight
Together side by side! on either hand
Lie hills of chariots o'erturn'd, and steeds
In beds of reeking gore! As, on the plains
Where Indus rolls his silver waves along,
Two youthful tigers, rushing from their lair,
By dogs and hunters hemm'd, with eyes of fire
Foam, rend, and mangle, and on ev'ry side
With untam'd rage assail the shouting bands,
Till, overpower'd by multitudes, they fall,
And with dire roarings yield their spirits up;
So fought the Hebrew princes, till, alas,

Philistia's closing numbers thinn'd their train.
And now amid a host of foes they stand,
The sole survivors of their daring troop :
Still, still their crimson swords they bravely wield,
And flesh them with the slain ! Ha, now they faint
With loss of blood, that from unnumber'd wounds
In purple tides roll their bright armour down :
No more their brands they flourish, with the fat
E'en of the mightiest fill'd ; among the dead
Groaning they fall, and with their war-hack'd shields
Cover each other, as they nobly sink
On honour's gory bed to rise no more !

On either side the battle rages now
With still increasing fury. Hell's foul prince,
And all his peers, madden'd to see how Saul
And his battalions fight, fresh tempests raise,
And in a dreadful uproar set the heav'ns :
Fighting amid Philistia's ranks, they shoot
Against the Hebrews show'rs of pond'rous hail,
And wing the arrows of th' uncircumcis'd
With flames horrific, till the azure cope
Seems vaulted o'er with fire ; where thunders, storms,
Hail, lightning, and tempestuous sleet, outroar
The battle's loudest tumult, 'Tis a field
Of sights and sounds more terrible than when
The polar seas, by arctic tempests stirr'd,
Lift their broad billows to the wat'ry clouds,
As though they from her radiant sphere would dash

The moon, and all the fires of heav'n put out,
While hosts of whirlwinds, from their caverns broke,
Sweep the white surgy ocean, urge those rocks
And mountains of eternal ice that gird
The northern isles t' encounter horrible,
And th' ill-fated bark, which luckless steers across
Those dismal deeps and gulfs, to atoms crush'd,
A thousand fathoms sink 'neath the profound.

In vain the king and princely Jonathan,
Like hunted lions, fly from wing to wing,
Death in their rear, and courage in their eyes;
Infernal agency prevails o'er all
Their skill and godlike valour. Israel's host,
Of half its leaders robb'd by slaughter's sword,
Of half its numbers thinn'd, sinks spiritless,
And to Philistia yields the bloody day.
Squadron on squadron routed now falls back
Upon each other, and discomfiture,
Carnage, and wild confusion, fill the field.
While now a flight of demon-pointed darts
Assail the king, and his faint body-guards,
The jav'lins pierce his sev'n-times-folded shield:
Each moment thins his few remaining chiefs
And valiant princes, who about him sink,
Like leaves in autumn round their parent oak,
Till naked to the howling blast and storm
He stands almost alone, a noble mark
For the fell archers' darts, that round him fall

Thick as the flakes of snow from winter's wing
Brooding o'er wild Siberia's dreary plains.
The blaze of his bright mail is dimm'd with blood;
His batter'd targe, like an opposing rock
'Gainst which the tide in vain its fury spends,
And roars in clouds of smoke its bosom down,
Is crimson'd with the reeking streams that warm'd
Philistia's mightiest heroes, and appears
Thick as a forest with sharp arrows stuck.
Now, press'd on ev'ry side, aloud he cries
To Azrikam, his armour-bearer, who
Yet stands unwounded by him, "Warrior brave,
The dreadful hour is come! the prophecy
Of the terrific spectre now must be
On me fulfill'd! Empire and crown are lost!
Hope flies my bosom; horror and despair
Have seiz'd my soul! Heav'n, hell, and fate have fought
Against thy king!—But he will bravely die
In seas of blood, 'mid carnage, death, and storms!
Though, wounded as I am, I will not wait
Thy ling'ring arm, O fate, lest that I fall
Into the hands of these unforeskin'd slaves.
Is there no gen'rous friend will deal the blow
That yields me death and darkness? Shall a king
The loss of throne and liberty survive?
Shall I to the insulting foe become
A captive, and in chains his triumph swell?
Manhood and Honour such disgrace forbid!

Be it annihilation, endless peace,
Or nameless horrors, that await the deed,
I'll greatly brave it, and through these fierce storms
Of battle and of warring elements
Rush to the grave, in my own life-stream bath'd!
Come death, come endless night—thus, thus I free
Myself of life, and die on the red point
Of my own trusty weapon!" Roman-like,
Drunk with despair, the monarch to his heart
Plung'd his blood-streaming falchion, and expir'd.
A host of thunders o'er the battle-field,
With sounds that stupifying horror caus'd,
Burst instantaneously; while lightnings fill'd
The atmosphere with unimagin'd glare.
Endor's foul hag, amid th' illumin'd clouds,
With all the fatal sisters and the chiefs
Of Pluto's dark abyss, by mortal eye
Were seen rejoicing; while their furious shouts
From Ky-am's source to Montezuma's land
Were plainly heard, as ancient records tell.

Disorder reigns through all the Hebrew host,
Save where the godlike Jonathan yet stems,
With a small vet'ran band, the conflict's tide.
High on tall Gilboa's highest top he stands,
And shakes his gleamy spear, that blazing shines
Like a red streaming meteor: his dark eye
Th' embattled plain beholds, where all is rout,
Confusion, combat, carnage, storms, and fate.

The fiends to slaughter the Philistines urge,
While o'er the field the Hebrews headlong fly.
Rank push'd on rank, phalanx on phalanx hurl'd :
Numbers unwounded, on the slipp'ry ground
Glutted with blood of noblest chieftains, fall,
Yet rise no more, for o'er them thund'ring roll,
Distilling gore, the chariots' iron wheels,
That crush their bones, and mangle all their limbs !
While clouds of fierce Phenician horse, spurr'd on
To aid the wild pursuit, promiscuously
Trample on bucklers, warriors, chiefs, and arms !
Here from the hill's dark brow were plainly seen
The Hebrew standards by their bearers cast
Regardlessly away, as now in flight
They vainly seek their safety : mountains there
Of armour mingled with the slain appear,
And steeds without their riders, red with blood,
Madly rebounding from the direful scene !
The prince his country's conquest views, and weeps
Big tears of anguish. Ah, bright youth renown'd,
E'en in that dismal hour thy bosom heav'd
With friendship's warmest sigh for the brave chief
Then far away, as thus thou sadly criest,
" O, would to heav'n my David was but here,
That side by side we vict'ry yet might win,
Or greatly fall together !" Fix'd to die,
Or yet retrieve the day, with his brave troop
From Gilboa's ridge he shouting rushes down

To check proud vict'ry's steps : the mountain tide,
When swell'd by wintry storms and plenteous show'rs,
Rolls not with such resistless force along,
Nor sweeps the sea-uprooting whirlwind's wing
With such impetuous rage the sounding shore !
Midway they meet Philistia's conq'ring host :
The brazen clang of arms the tempest drowns,
And shakes old Gilboa's top. So meet the floods
Of the vast Oroonoko with the tide
Of the blue-green Atlantic, wrapt in storms.
'Tis the last struggle, much-lamented prince,
Of dying brav'ry ! The last awful blaze
Of thy expiring valour o'er the field
A glory casts ; but while it shines it dies,
And leaves the scene to darkness and to death !

Ah, much-lov'd warrior, flow'r of chivalry,
Through ev'ry age applauded and rever'd,
Peace to thy cold red grave ! sweet be thy sleep !
What though no proud mausoleum rear'd to heav'n,
Nor pyramidic pile thy brave deeds tell,
Nor e'en a simple stone or grassy mound
Marks the blood-crimson'd spot where thou didst fall,
Yet shall thy friendship and thy martial fame
For ever be admir'd in deathless song !

Meanwhile, above the tempest of the fight,
Michal and all her trembling virgins stood
On the hill's topmost summit ; from her tent
She view'd the rolling torrent of the war

Sweeping the Hebrews off the bloody plain !
She heard the thunder's roar ; the lightning's glare
Beheld, that seem'd to set the heav'ns on fire,
And trembled at the fiends' stupendous shouts !
She shrieking saw where late her father fought
No banner wave, no broad-sword gleam full bright,
And felt assur'd he on the battle-field
Slept, cold in his own blood ! Last she beheld
Her princely brother sink amid the fray,
To rise no more ! Phaltier, her second lord,
Far o'er the plain was driv'n before the foe.
While night descended fast the mountain round,
Groans of the dying and the shriek of death,
With warlike shouts, rose on the burden'd winds
That howl'd across the hill. As now a troop
Of sworded horsemen through the gloom was seen
The Hebrew camp approaching, Michal scream'd,
And fled the royal tents ; alone she fled,
Leaving her fainting damsels far behind,
Captives to the marauders. O'er the wastes
And trackless moors she hurried, lost in grief,
And quite regardless to what desert drear,
Steep, precipice, or bog, or fenny pool,
Her footsteps stray'd. No longer sounded now
Thro' the deep gloom death-shrieks, or battle-shouts,
Or clang of chariots and of brazen arms,
For she had wander'd far by midnight watch,
And at a forest's darksome bourn arriv'd.

The owlet from her leafy bow'r loud hoots
The lab'ring moon, as through the heavy clouds
She struggles o'er the dark-green woods to fling
Her silver-gleaming mantle ; shrill the screams
Of the foul bird the wo-stunn'd princess wakes
From her deep grief-fraught musings ; forth night's lamp
Full brightly shines betwixt the breaches wide
Of the black mists, which on the passing winds
Along the sky sail slowly, as with looks
Of dread alarm fair Michal views the scene,
And shudders at her danger. But, alas,
Scarce had she cast her tearful eyes around
On the dark savage shades where Cynthia's beam,
With all its radiance, only serv'd to show
Sights that created in her breast alarm,
When from a bosky dingle rush'd a band
Of ghastly-visag'd robbers. Brightly flash'd
Their keen-edg'd daggers to the lunar ray
As they approach'd the princess, who with shrieks
Awoke the frighted echoes of the woods,
Till, by the ruffians seiz'd and overpower'd,
With an excess of fear she senseless sunk
Into their brawny arms. Pleas'd with a prize
So noble and so fair, the fell brigands
Convey'd her through the forest's dismal wilds
To the vast cavern of their barb'rous chief.

Soon as the princess op'd her radiant eyes
She saw, amid a rock-encircled cave,

A fell banditti, high in noisy glee.
Riot and laughter, song, and shout, and glee,
Resounded loudly through the murky den.
Their visages, half viewless by the lamp
That o'er the centre of their table hung,
Seem'd of demonian cast, and in the mind
Of the half hopeless Michal images
Of dreadful horror rais'd. Now the fell clan,
As she her eyes of heav'nly blue cast round
The hall of rocks, trembling with speechless dread,
Gaz'd, wonder-struck, as though a vision bright
Of seraph in celestial beauty clad
Had from a radiant cloud burst on their sight.
The music ceas'd ; th' applauded minstrel dropp'd
Th' unfinish'd lay such finish'd charms to view ;
And into silence died the echoed roar
Of jocund revelry. — Such magic pow'r
Had female beauty on the savage hearts
Of all the horde, save the ferocious chief!
He from his seat arose, and Michal met :
His port was kingly, and his stature tall,
But on his frowning brow sat dire revenge ;
His countenance, a picture of his heart,
Was ruthless as the lion's, and his eye
As the fierce ossifrage's keenly fell.
Armour he wore upon his thighs and breast
Of shining brass, and o'er his shoulders hung
A tiger's spotted skin ; his iron casque,

Crown'd with a dark and formidable plume,
Stood on a rock, and by it hung his shield
Of ox's hide and metal gleaming bright.

The royal princess, kneeling, to him thus:—

“ O deign, thou unknown chief, thy suppliant now
With kind commiseration to regard!

Behold me bathe thy garments with my tears,
And plead for mercy! 'Tis, O stranger-dread,

The daughter of a king who to thee kneels,

And supplicates compassion! Kindly, then,

Pity the mis'ries of a princess, whom.

Stern fate has robb'd of father, husband, friends!

Cold on the field of battle sleeps my sire:

On Gilboa's mount his brazen buckler lies

Steep'd in his blood; his royal locks are drench'd

With midnight dews, and stiff in clotted gore!

There, too, on honour's purple bed are laid

My valiant brothers! Broken is the shield

Of valour's sons! Weep, hapless Israel, weep—

Thy bulwarks are for ever laid in dust!

Why am I left, when of my royal house

The glory and the flow'r are fall'n in war?

Among the slain they lie on yonder fields,

A prey to the devouring wolf and kite!

The vulture of the rocks and the fierce kite

Will on them feed, and glut their greedy thirst

At the blood-welling wounds of those I love!

O warrior chief, stranger unknown, permit

Me to return to my lov'd husband's arms,
My banish'd David at the court of Gath,
Whose presence will these bitter woes console,
And soften my keen anguish."

"What!" exclaim'd
The frightful-visag'd chief of the brigands,
"Art thou, fair sorc'ress, of fam'd Israel's race,
Daughter of Saul their monarch, and the wife
To that man-queller David? Thanks, ye gods!
Revenge—revenge is mine! I'll to the lees
Thy cup, dark demon, drain, and feast on blood!
Those pleading looks will nought avail with me;
My heart has long been steel'd to beauty's charms,
And all its fascination. Thou dost gaze,
Vile Israelite, with wonder! Learn, then, who
Now stands before thee: I, of princely line
Among th' Amalekites, am Zaphan call'd.
Thy father—curst be all his hated race—
In battle slew my sire with his own hand;
For which, ye gods of heav'n and earth, now grant
Vultures, and wolves, and dogs, on yonder plain
May on his carcass feed, and lap his blood!
Young in the field, and new to deeds of arms,
I saw my father by th' invader's sword
Cleft to the chine, unable to revenge
Th' accursed act! but I e'er since have strove
To wreak my vengeance on the Hebrew race;
And oft has my good brand been to the hilt

Bath'd in the stream that issued from their hearts !
Yet other causes have I to abhor
The hated race of Jacob's fav'rite son,
The sword of David, thy detested lord,
My country hath consum'd, and driv'n me out,
With these my faithful few, (the wreck of all
My num'rous bands) into the woods and wilds,
Refuge to seek from his unsparing rage !
• Hither to this lone forest have we fled,
And here we dwell, and feed our brave revenge,
By plund'ring and destroying those who fall
Within our pow'r of Israel's loathed tribes.
Now, on the altars of the gods divine,
A princess, to my fellest foes allied,
I'll immolate, and ev'ry deity
In earth and air, in heav'n and hell, invoke
To banquet on the noble sacrifice !
Ye sacred priests yet left among my train,
Behold your victim ! On yon mountain's top,
Amid the dark recesses of the woods,
Moloc, whom I adore, an altar hath ;
There shall ye offer, with accustom'd rites,
A princess, and the Hebrew's destin'd queen !"

Loud laugh'd th' infernal clan through all the cave,
And shouted forth their joy, as the curs'd priests
Their victim by the lovely tresses seiz'd ;
Who inly supplicated the Supreme
That angels to receive her parting soul

Might from the courts of heav'n be now sent down.
Loaded with garlands, Zaphan led her on
Betwixt the bloody priests to Moloc's hill,
Whereon his altar stood, embower'd with shade,
And hemm'd with skulls and bones so thick, it seem'd
Another Golgotha. The moon now wrapt
In clouds of mournful hue her radiant face,
Unable on so dread a scene to gaze ;
The bowing forest groan'd with agony,
And Nature from her inmost bosom heav'd
Sighs forth so deep, that all the mountain shook !

The priests the shrine approach ; with mystic rites
They now their foul demonian god invoc'd.
On a hot thunderbolt, that through the woods
Rush'd horribly, and all its leafage scath'd,
He swift descended to the sacrifice,
His form dilating to the darken'd stars
As he with triumph the fair victim eyed.
And now ferocious Zaphan led the lamb,
Meek and resign'd, to the red altar's steps,
Where waited dire the priest with bloody knife,
To strike it to her heart : he lifts his arm—
Joy flashes from the eyes of the dark chief,
Panting with wild revenge !—But God, who reigns
Supreme o'er all creation without end,
E'en at that moment sent his angel down
To rescue Michal from th' assassin's gripe,
With sev'n-times-bolted thunder arm'd, and fires

Such as transpierc'd th' amaz'd Satanic host
When from the battlements of heav'n they fell
To utter darkness and profound despair;
The forest seem'd in flames, and hurl'd her oaks
And cedars headlong with terrific crash,
To earth, that shook in agony of fear:
Zaphan his victim loos'd, and stood aghast;
His sacrificing knife the high-priest dropp'd,
And from the altar turn'd: proud Moloc too,
Loud yelling with despite, the forest fled.
A whirlwind fell'd the consecrated grove,
And overturn'd its altar, sweeping thence
Zaphan th' implacable, and all his train!

The angel, in terrestrial form array'd
Of a most beauteous youth, the princess rais'd
Fall'n to the earth in terror, and, with smiles
Of love supernal, through the forest led
The lovely mourner to the palace gates
Of her brave David. He, within the halls
Of Ziklag's tow'rs, by Achish to him giv'n,
On couches of the noblest Tyrian dye,
'Mid all his martial worthies, sat in state
At the refreshing banquet, glad to rest
Their weary limbs after the toils of fight
And hardships of invasion; glad to lay
Their cumbrous armour for awhile aside,
And cheer their hearts with wine. But O, what bard,
How great so'er his magic skill to touch

The cithern's tuneful strings, can sing the joy
That sprung in David's soul, and fir'd his eye,
As open flew the portal of the hall,
And to th' astonish'd warriors Michal shew'd!
Surprise and bliss o'erpower'd him; from his couch
Of purple and bright gold he forward sprang,
And caught the princess in his outstretch'd arms.
The cares and sorrows of th' illustrious pair
Were for a time in mutual raptures lost;
Symphonious airs and martial shouts arose,
Greeting th' arrival of the lady bright.
But ah! a tale full fraught with direful woes
Michal had now to tell, that quickly chang'd
Transports to sadness, shouts and cheerful strains
To dismal groans and sighs. The battle's fate—
The death of her lov'd brothers and her sire
On Gilboa's blood-drench'd heights—the warriors struck
Speechless with grief and horror, as, with tears
Trickling adown her cheek, the princess pale
Rehears'd the story of her house's fall!
The soul of David anguish deep o'erflow'd,
Drowning his new-born joys, to learn his friend,
His dear-lov'd Jonathan, on Gilboa's fields
Lay pierc'd by heathen swords! His robes he rent,
As did his worthies all, and their full locks
Divided from their heads.^a Sighs and laments
Were heard through all the palace. By his seat,
Against a marble pillar, hung the harp

Of weeping David, which a page displac'd
At his behest, and the sweet instrument
Gave to his princely lord. The bardish dirge
For his lov'd friend, on Gilboa's fatal hill
Mangled and gash'd, amid the ghastly piles
Of slaughter'd multitudes, stretch'd, cold, and pale,
And stiff'ning to the winds in his own blood,
The royal minstrel struck, with brimming eye,
So most divinely solemn, sweet, and sad,
As down a demon's cheek might tears have drawn,
And pity in his iron breast instill'd.

“ Sound, sound the mournful dirge ; for on thy hill
Of night and storms, O Gilboa, sleep in death
The mighty !—The bright brow of beauty's stain'd
With dust and gore ! The light of Jacob's house
In endless night is quench'd ; in blood is set
Thy glory, Israel, ne'er again to rise !—
How are the mighty fall'n !—No more their arms
Shall dazzling flash along the battle-van
Bright as the eye of vict'ry ! Broken lie
Their golden bucklers ; rusty are their spears
With gore of haughtiest heroes—Death's pale hand
Their war-bows hath unstrung, their falchion blades
Shiver'd. O, tell it not in Askelon,
Nor publish it in Gath ; lest the proud maids,
The daughters of th' uncircumcis'd, prepare
The wreaths of conquest for their warriors' brows,
And triumph o'er the brave !—

Ye mountain groves
Of Gilboa, let no more the vernal dew
Nor balmy showers of summer eves descend,
Your blossomings to cheer! Be verdureless,
Ye lofty heights; and let the blue-wing'd blast
Of th' eastern desert o'er you hotly blow,
Consuming all your sweets, for ye are bath'd
Deep with the life-blood of the flow'r in war—
Th' anointed of Jehovah! There the shield
Of those in battle terrible is cast
Vilely away, the weapons of the brave,
As though the sacred balm of sov'reignty
Had ne'er been on their raven locks outpour'd.
Weep floods of tears, and strike your plaintive harps,
Ye damsels fair of Jacob's ancient house,
The deeds of Saul and his redoubted son
To celebrate in deathless elegy!—
Fiercely in arms, amid the fields of fate,
They, like a mountain lion in a fold
Of sheep, roar'd mangling! Like the eagle fleet,
That hasteth to her prey, they dauntless sought
The combat's deepest swell, nor turn'd their backs
Upon the proudest son of chivalry!—
Offspring of Saul, the arrows of thy bow
Were with the blood of mightiest warriors drunk!
Thy falchion with the fat of kings was fill'd,
Chief of the house of Kish!—

O, Jonathan—

Prince, brother, friend—for thee my soul is griev'd !
On thy late beauteous visage now doth sit
The ghastliness of death ; thy cheek is pale,
And stain'd with clotted gore ; thy heart is cold,
That with the ardour of such friendship glow'd,—
A friendship wonderful, and passing sweet.—
Ah me, its dissolution fills my soul,
Cut off from joy and kindred, with keen wo
Unutt'able ! Yes, on yon battle-plain
A corse thou liest 'mid warfare's bleeding pile !—
Flow fast, my tears, no more shall I behold
Thy lovely form, or feel thy warm embrace !
But we again shall meet in yonder skies,
To where thy spirit's fled, before the throne
Of glory measureless. A seraph now,
Thou shin'st in beauty incorruptible,
And immortality is all thy own ;
Whilst I in this dark vale of tears remain,
To mourn thy early flight to brighter worlds !”

His lyre aside the weeping harper cast,
Whose wizard strings had drawn a loud lament
From all the martial throng ; for the big tears
His sight bedimm'd, and agony of grief
His heart of fondness wrung.—But language fails
To paint those floods of anguish that o'erwhelm'd
The princely bard, as the remembrance rush'd
Across his soul of Jonathan's fond love—
Of his last words—his farewell looks and sighs—

When by the cavern of Engedi's wilds
They parted, ne'er again on earth to meet.
Minstrel of heav'n, thy plaintive elegy,
Sublimely sweet, and mournful as sublime,
Through ev'ry age shall live green in the rolls
Of God's eternal volume, there to shine
Bright as thy friendship, lasting as thy fame!

To David's darkling tow'rs at midnight came
Th' eternal Deity: dread thunders shook
The tumbling walls of Ziklag to the ground,
And whirlwinds rent the trembling skies in twain.
His throne of burning sapphire was enclos'd
With cherub and with seraph, clad in robes
Of glory brighter than a thousand suns;
His train the palace fill'd; and His vast pomp
O'erpower'd the fainting David. 'Gain loud peal'd
The solemn thunder from a host of clouds,
Scented with all the odours of those climes
Of blessedness that lie beyond the skies.
Now, with the sound loud as of rolling floods,
That in their overwhelming torrents bear
Along the treasures of a thousand vales,
Spake the Most High to David, and thus said:—

“Go up, my son, with all thy valiant host,
For thou o'er Israel's cities now shalt reign!
To Hebron haste; there thou the crown and robes
Of sov'reignty, to thee and to thy house
Long promis'd, in full splendour shalt assume!
In Zion thou o'er the elected tribes

Shalt my vicegerent rule ; dominion, pow'r,
And high regality, o'er all the land
And heathen nations round fair Canaan's bourn,
Shalt thou obtain ; while vict'ry, by thy side
Her sun-bright wings outspreading, shall enclose
Thy throne with earthly glory and renown,
And all thy foes subdue ! Soon from thy loins
Shall spring a Son, who will of all mankind
The wisest be, and to the utmost realms
Of this terraqueous globe his fame shall spread !
All monarchs shall before his footstool fall—
All nations serve him—riches shall he have
Vast as his sapience—and his pow'rful rule
Will o'er the mighty stretch, from the green banks
Of wide Euphrates to Philistia's sea,
And th' ancient borders of fam'd Chemia's land !—

'Tis I, who walk upon the whirlwind's wing,
Still the loud main, and stay his angry surge,
With thunder clothe myself, command the sun
Out of its place, shake the deep-groaning earth,
Quench with my finger the expiring stars,
Create new worlds, and rule the universe !
Then wait thou on thy God, who in thy hand
Salvation's bright invulnerable shield,
And vict'ry's deadly-gleaming brand, hath plac'd ;
Hath with His strength to battle mail'd thy limbs,
And giv'n thy blood-dyed feet whereon to tread
The haughty necks of all thy vanquish'd foes !
Rejoice thou in thy God ; and length of days,

Honour and fame, dominion, majesty,
Empire and crowns, thy portion here on earth,
And everlasting bliss in heav'n, shall be!"

Th' Almighty to his temple re-ascends;
And David, with his wives and warrior bands,
The halls of Ziklag quit for Hebron's tow'rs.
Now on their way they met a warlike troop
Of Jabesh-Gilead, who the headless trunks
Of Saul and his slain sons bore on their shields.
Philistia's chiefs in the red fields of fight
Had of their armour stripp'd them, and, their heads
From off their shoulders lopping, in the fanes
Of Astoreth and Dagon hung the spoils
Of battle and of triumph, to their gods
With impious rites devoted. David's eyes
Rain'd floods of tears, that wash'd the clotted gore
From the gash'd wounds of his cold mangled friend.
All wept aloud, save he whom grief struck dumb!
No painter could pourtray those looks of wo
As o'er the body his torn robe he threw,
And groaning follow'd it to Gilead's plain.
A forest there the gallant soldiery fell'd
To raise the fun'ral pile, lofty and grand.
Eight days they toil upon the forest heights,
Then high in air the woody structure swells;
The sylvan pyramid majestic stands,
Tall as a palace, stately as a fane
Of ample magnitude! On the ninth morn
The chieftains in their fulgent war-array

Attend the sacred burning.^p Round the pyre
Sev'n times did Gilead's mighty warmen bear
The bodies of their monarch and his sons,
Follow'd by David, clad in mournful robes,
And hemm'd with goodly bands of martial youths,
Who splendid armour, spears, and ensigns bore.
The royal corpses were, on sumptuous biers,
O'erspread with palls of purple wrought with gold
And hung with shields, in pomp funereal laid.
From ev'ry tribe a host of warriors came
To join the sad procession: from each tribe
Innum'rous virgins flock'd, who o'er the ground
Show'r'd native flow'rs, the lofty pile bedeck'd
With wreaths of evergreen and cypress crowns,
And on it cast a thousand od'rous gums.
Their mellow voices, temper'd to the airs
Of martial music, breathing plaintive strains
Of deepest sorrow, solemn dirges sung,
Dirges that much the fallen chiefs bewail'd.^q
By David taught, the damsels chanted too
That noble war-song, with th' achievements fill'd
Of princely Jonathan's fam'd battle-bow—
A lay which in the book of Jasher's tales
Liv'd bright through many an age.^r

Now on the pyre

The chiefs the kingly bodies gently laid,
Embalm'd with onycha and galbanum;
A hecatomb of oxen, and of lambs
White as the fleecy clouds, around the dead,

In honour of their hardiment, were plac'd ;
Flagons of aromatic oil were pour'd
Upon the pile, and fragrant spices thrown
Of richest redolence : and now the fire
Envelopes all ! The pyre immense is seen
Shrouded in one vast blaze ; the mounting flames
Voluminous climb upward to the skies,
Inwreath'd with spiry clouds of fragrant smoke
Borne on the fanning winds. David aloof
Beholds the splendours of the fun'ral pile
Illume the ev'ning skies, and on his harp
Invokes the shade of his beloved friend,
In strains more moving than a seraph's lyre
Bewailing at the stake a martyr's pangs !

Meanwhile the blazing honours of the dead
Expire in ashes, from which chosen chiefs
The royal bones collect, and with fond tears
Of sad remembrance in a noble urn
Of gold of Parvian place them ; others raise
The lofty mound, (of old, memorial green
Of those illustrious who in battle fall)
In which the sacred relics are entomb'd :
With them a silver vase, fill'd with his tears,
The tender David mournfully inhumes.
Then on the top they plant a beauteous tree,
That blooms for ever green—the emblem fair
Of that bright fame which crowns the nobly brave
Who perish for their land !

Scarce had the rites

Funereal been perform'd, ere princes flock'd
From ev'ry tribe to David, with their trains :
All men of valour, arm'd with shield and spear,
And of one heart, the diadem to set
Of Israel on the royal minstrel's brow.
Amid an ample hall of splendid pomp
The chiefs and ancients of the tribes now met,
In convocation num'rous and august,
Th' inauguration of the princely bard
With regal ceremony to perform.
In the full blaze of arms each warrior prince
Came, follow'd by his train, with shield and bow,
To guard the entrance to the grand saloon :
Then came the high-priest, clad in all his gear
Pontifical, and dazzling as the sun :
Behind him in procession solemn mov'd
The seers and Levites, semblably array'd
In those gay robes their num'rous orders grac'd ;
To these succeeded Israel's minstrels, fam'd
For skill divine to touch the mellow harp ;
Damsels right passing fair, with theorbo,
And lute, and harp, accompanied their song,
Filling the air with sounds cherubical ;
While Azariah, with his brotherhood,
On the sheminith join'd the chorus loud.
Nor were there wanting Asaph, or his sons,
With their resounding cymbals, or the tones,
So wildly sweet, of psalt'ries, dulcimers,
Or the full clarion's echo-doubled blast.

Next follow'd six fair youths in fulgent garbs,
Bearing upon a costly pall of state
Th' imperial crown of Israel : its rich gems
Shone brighter than Golconda's diamond banks,
And in the solar ray more radiant gleam'd
Than that fam'd river when in China's realms,
O'er golden sands with pearl and sapphire mix'd,
It warbling flows beneath th' enamour'd moon.
And now, with trophies dighted, and emblaz'd
With figures, emblematical of war,
Conquest and triumph, David's bannerol
Appear'd refulgent, streaming on the winds :
Unnumber'd multitudes with plaudits hail'd
Its most august appearance : borne it was
By brave Adino, the fierce Tachmonite,
Chief of the chieftains, whose resplendent mail
And orb'd shield of sev'n-times-folded gold
Cast o'er his darksome visage streams of light,
Bright and terrific as the ruddy flames
Circling a burning tow'r. To him succeeds
Asahel, graceful form'd, and swift of foot
As the wild roebuck ; he the pond'rous glave
And magic armour of Goliath bears.
Then came rich streamers, clouds of flashing spears,
Bucklers and helms, the gloried spoils of war.
Now comes the king himself in radiant pomp :
The fairest damsels found in all the land
Before him dance, and strew th' empurpled ground
With chaplets of a thousand varied hues :

His glorious mantle was of needle-work,
And wrought with rubies, amethysts, and pearls :
His royal robes with purple and bright gold
Glow'd, like the vesture of the setting sun
When in the western clouds he decks himself,
And sinks to feast with Thetis. His sweet smiles
Were like the morning's radiance, when ascends
The star of day in cloudless majesty
To wake the dreaming world. On either side
The regal minstrel walk'd his beauteous wives.
On his right hand th' imperial Michal mov'd :
In splendour, majesty, and native grace,
More like a goddess than an earthly queen.
Behind the king, like brazen tow'rs of might,
His martial worthies march'd : his faithful band,
That bravely with him shar'd the dangers, toils,
And miseries of banishment, now clos'd
The warlike grand parade. Amid the hall
Before an altar, with rich off'rings heap'd
And with a thousand smoking gums perfum'd,
The monarch kneels : a horn of sacred oil,
Ta'en from the curtain'd fane, the high-priest pours
O'er all his golden locks ; a fragrancy,
More exquisite than gales that fables dream
Of blest Elysium fan the bloomy groves,
Spreads thro' the hall, and cheers th' all-joyous throng :
Then with the regal crown Abiathar
His godlike brow adorns, and to the throne
The new-inaugurated sov'reign leads.

A host of shouts from mingled multitudes,
Loud as the rolling sea when storms conspire
To lash with thunderbolts its mountain surge,
Rose lofty as the azure arch of heav'n!
The minstrels strike their harps, the cymbals clash,
The trumpet and the cornet's notes are heard,
Mingled with voice of damsel and of bard,
Sackbut and psalt'ry sweet. Again the hosts
Their royal leader greet, and rend the skies
With thrice-redoubled plaudits; yet more loud
They strike their ringing shields, till hill and dale
Far distant tremble with th' earth-shaking sound.

Scarce had the chorus ceas'd, when to the sight
Of mortals, round th' imperial seat of state,
Michael, the prince celestial of the tribes,
And Abdiel, David's guardian, now appear'd,
His throne encircling with their sun-bright wings!
A train of seraphs hover'd o'er his head,
With harps of gold breathing the airs of heav'n!
The warriors prostrate on their faces fell;
For now a sea of liquid light enspher'd
The godlike king, while unimagined pomp
And burning glory hemm'd the sov'reign seat!
The golden lyres were heard again to chime,
And notes angelical rung through the hall,
Inspiring ecstasies; and this the song:—

“Hail, kingly warrior, son of deathless fame!
Hail, fav'rite of th' eternal King of kings!
Thy throne for ever shall establish'd be—

Thy empire never end ! for of thy line
The great MESSIAH, Heav'n's anointed Son,
Shall in due time be born ! His wide domain
Will to the utmost corners of the globe
And the green islands of the sea extend,
Till time, and day's bright orb, in darkness die !
Where'er the sun with golden beam ascends,
And where its setting lustre gilds the west,
Or moon, night's regent, with her paler ray,
The distant kingdoms of the earth illumines,●
There shall His name be heard, and praises sung,
Till the vast world one temple great become !
Therein all nations to its rightful Lord
Shall grateful homage pay ; and there shall spread
His sacred knowledge, as the ocean floods
Cover the wide abyss from pole to pole !”

N O T E S.

NOTE ^a Page 6, line 7.

From the blue lake of eagles ;

The late discovered sea of Aral, near the Caspian.

NOTE ^b Page 6, line 10.

And Sindas' sacred source to Carazan,

Carazan was ascended by the French astronomers, and is said to be 15,000 feet high ; which is 2,535 feet higher than the Peak of Teneriff.

NOTE ^c Page 22, line ult.

Was coil'd a most horrific monster fierce,

“ Prodigious numbers of flying speckled serpents abound in Arabia and Libya, and have wings like bats. It is said the young ones kill their dam ; but it is most certain that, if the bird Ibis did not watch their entrance into Egypt at the season thereof, they would ruin the country.”

Brown's Dictionary of the Holy Bible, p. 612.

Abisarus, an Indian prince, had two serpents, the one 140 cubits long, and the other 80. The serpent which Regulus, the Roman, killed with machines near Bagrada, in Africa, is said to have been 120 feet long. In the German Ephemerides we read of a serpent that swallowed a woman big with child ; and of another that swallowed a buffalo, or large wild ox.

NOTE d Page 31, line 1.

The smiling Hours the lamp of Lucifer,

The son of Jupiter and Aurora, made the morning star.

NOTE e Page 36, line 25.

Descended Abdiel;

Let those, who doubt the ministration of angels, read Dr. Usher, Leigh, Clark, Dr. Martin, Bishop Hall, Bucanus Polonus's "Syntagmae Theologiae Christianae;" likewise Aurelius, Bucer, Pareus, Zancheus, &c. &c.

NOTE f Page 74, line ult.

Of Ashkenaz, that in its amber flood,

The conjecture of Mons. Bochart is highly probable, that what in after ages was, and now is, called the Euxine sea, was, in the early ages of the world, called the sea of Ashkenaz, from the settlement of the family of Ashkenaz (who, of the three sons of Gomer, is first named by Moses) on the coasts along which lies the entrance into the sea. Hence by the Greeks (with a little variation of the word) it was at first named Πόντος Ἀξενος, Pontus Axenus, afterwards changed into that of Πόντος Εὐξενος, Pontus Euxinus, the hospitable sea.

NOTE g Page 75, line 2.

And those green isles wash'd by Elisha's wave;

The family of Elisha possessed themselves of the most considerable isles lying in the sea between Europe and Asia, as they are called by the prophet Ezekiel the isles of Elisha, xxvii. 7; and, as the isles lying in this sea were thus originally known by the name of the Isles of Elisha, so it is probable that the sea itself was once called the sea of Elisha: and, though the name wore away in process of time in other parts, yet it seems to have been preserved in that part, which to this day is frequently called the Hellespont, Elisæ Pontus, i. e. the sea of Elisha.

NOTE ^h Page 79, line 5.

The guardian spirit touch'd, and with a pow'r

“ Michael from Adam's eyes the film remov'd,
Which that false fruit that promis'd clearer sight
Had bred; then purg'd with euphrasy and rue
The visual nerve, for he had much to see,
And from the well of life three drops instill'd.” &c.

Paradise Lost, book xi. line 412.

NOTE ⁱ Page 81, line 27.

His mystic ark, your boasted sure defence,

In the Chaldee paraphrase, Goliath boasts that he had killed Hophni and Phineas, and taken the ark of God prisoner.

NOTE ^k Page 83, line 6.

The gods divine of earth, and sea, and air.

“ The Carthaginians and Phenicians, who were a remnant of the ancient Canaanites, that are often mentioned in scripture as a warlike people under the name of Philistines, (for the word Phoenica is Greek) in common with the Gauls and Germans, offered up to their idols many of the prisoners whom they took in war.”

Dr. Hurd's Religious Rites and Ceremonies.

NOTE ^l Page 87, line 5.

Of Chersonesus, and the Ambron's vales.

People of ancient Gaul, living by pillage.

See Roman History.

NOTE ^m Page 118, line 2.

That swan-like on your dust in music dies.

Dr. Fortescue and some others would have us believe that Jephthah did not sacrifice his daughter, but that she was devoted to a single state in the service of the Lord, though they have not been so kind as to inform us to what order she belonged, or in what temple or sacred house she was doomed to spend her days;

nor do we read any where in scripture of a society of vestals dedicated to any sacred services, as was the case among the ancient heathens, and the worshippers of the sun in Peru.

It was expressly enjoined in the Jewish law to sacrifice all who had been devoted to the Lord: "No man shall be redeemed, but shall be put to death without remission." The Vulgate has it, "Non redemetur sed morte morietur." Lev. xxvii. 29.

Dr. Lightfoot says it was in effect a sacrifice to Moloc.

"Probably the reason why it is left dubious by the inspired penman, whether Jephthah sacrificed his daughter or no, was, that they who did afterwards offer their children might not take any encouragement from the instance." *Matthew Henry.*

NOTE ⁿ Page 128, line 5.

If for her dowry he two hundred heads

See Josephus.

NOTE ^o Page 143, line 10.

Two hundred zuzims for her could not give,

The usual portion of a lady of quality.

NOTE ^p Page 144, line 22.

Michael, the prince of Israel's tribes, appear'd

" 'Tis a doctrine almost universally believed by Christians, as well Protestants as Catholics, that there are guardian angels appointed by God as his vicegerents, for the protection and government of cities, provinces, kingdoms, and monarchies, and those as well of heathens as of believers. All this is so plainly proved from those texts of Daniel, that it admits of no farther controversy. The prince of the Persians, and that other of the Grecians, are granted to be the guardians and protecting ministers of those empires. It cannot be denied that they were opposite, and resisted one another. St. Michael is mentioned by his name as the patron of the Jews, and is now taken by the Christians as the protector general of their religion." &c.

*Dryden's Dedication of the Satires of
Decimus Junius Juvenalis, p. 24.*

“ For know this ample element contains
Unnumber’d spiritual beings, or malign
Or good to man.” *Thomson’s Alfred.*

“ For there the King of nature in full blaze
Calls ev’ry splendour forth, and there his court
Amid ethereal pow’rs and virtues holds,
Angels, archangels, tutelary gods
Of cities, nations, empires, and of worlds.”
Thomson’s Liberty.

NOTE 9 Page 145, line 25.

In heav’n of thrones that minister to God,

The learned Mede, in his *Diatribæ* of the angels, speaks of seven principal angels that minister before the throne of God, and are therefore called archangels, some of whose names we have in scripture, as Michael, Gabriel, Raphael.

The ancient Jewish tradition, according to Ben Maimon, makes ten degrees or orders of angels. 1. The *Chaios Acodesh*, pure, holy; 2. The *Osamins*, rapid; 3. The *Oralim*, the strong; 4. The *Chasmalin*, the flames; 5. The *Seraphim*, sparks; 6. The *Malachim*, angels’ messengers; 7. The *Eloim*, the gods or judges; 8. The *Ben Eloim*, children of the gods; 9. *Cherubim*, images; 10. *Ychim*, the anointed.

NOTE 1 Page 147, line 12.

His mitre like a fiery comet shone,

The mitres of the common priests were made of many rounds of linen, sewed in the form of a crown, with a fold of plain linen to hide the seam; but the high-priest wore another above that, of a violet colour, which was encompassed with a triple crown of gold, with small bottoms of henbane flowers, interrupted in the front with the golden plate inscribed “Holiness to the Lord.”

See Josephus.

NOTE 5 Page 147, line 16.

The Urim and the Thummim dreadful-blaz’d,

Of the different opinions of the Urim and Thummim, see Le Clerc, Weems, Hottinger, Prideaux, &c. Josephus will have

the stones of the Urim and Thummim to have retained their lustre till A. M. 3890, though it is certain the oracle was wanting some ages before, in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah

NOTE † Page 164, line 13.

——— *they weep celestial tears,*

“Tears, such as angels weep, burst forth”

Paradise Lost, book i

NOTE † Page 174, line 21.

Mighty in battle, dreadful in the war!

“The descent of God to the rescue of David, described by him in Psalm xviii.” as Dr Fortescue observes, “exceeds every thing of this nature that is to be found in any of the remains of heathen antiquity; and it is undoubted that this storm is represented as real” See likewise Chandler, Delancy, Lowth’s 9th Prelection, &c.

NOTE x Page 184, line 11

The infant moon’s new demicirclet hail’d,

“The feast of the new moon was always proclaimed by the sound of trumpets. The fixing of the time of the new moon, for want of astronomical tables, was done in this manner —The first persons who observed the new moon were to repair immediately to the grand council to give notice of it Inquiry was then made into the credibility of the informers, and secondly whether their information agreed with such computations as they were then able to make. After which the president proclaimed the new moon by saying *Mehdish* (it is consecrated) This was twice repeated aloud by the people, after which it was proclaimed every where by the sound of the trumpet.”

Universal History, vol i p 33.

NOTE y Page 187, line 17.

Like Lygdian statues on a monument,

Alabaster, so called by the ancients.

NOTE ^a Page 228, line 8.

Bord'ring on adoration ;

“ Si corriendo una cortina
Un angel se descubriesse,
No era justo que temiesse
Ver su figura divina ? ”

Lopez de Vega's Duquesa de Amalfi.

NOTE ^b Page 237, line 4.

His plume-crown'd morion glitters from afar,

Helmet. See Ash's Dictionary.

NOTE ^c Page 248, line 25.

A teraphim, the oracle of hell '

See Rabbi Eliezer's account of Teraphims.

NOTE ^d Page 250, line 24.

——— *Michael appear'd*

“ Homer, instructed by tradition, knew that God sends his angels to the succour of the afflicted. The scripture is full of examples of this truth. The story of Tobit has a wonderful relation with Hermes conveying the disconsolate Priam to the pavilion of Achilles.”

Madame Dacier.

NOTE ^e Page 253, line 8.

And room superfluous found for martial feats.

Strabo says there were caves in Arabia sufficient to hold four thousand men. Vansleb mentions one in Egypt large enough to draw up one thousand horsemen.

NOTE ^f Page 296, line 19.

The gorgeous peacock, who, with sapphire neck,

The peacock anciently used to be served on the table with the feathers of the neck and tail preserved.

NOTE ^g Page 297, line 9

Care banishing ———

Judges, cap ix ver 18

NOTE ^h Page 322, line 15

Wherein he dwelt, secure from all his foes

Perhaps some might be led to think David's sudden passion for Ahinoam savours too much of the libidinalist. Be it as it may, we know the circumstance actually took place, agreeably to the customs and manners of those times when polygamy was allowable. Besides, I have drawn David as he really was, not a perfect hero; a character (as has been justly observed) no where to be found on earth; but a man subject to all the passions attendant on frail humanity.

NOTE ⁱ Page 330, line 23

In divination, spells, and arts abstruse.

Their different orders were—the Chartuin, or magicians; the Hhobre Shamaim, Ashaphim, and Mehhonenim, astrologers, observers of times, soothsayers; the Menahhashim, or enchanters, who had intercourse with serpents; the Mecashephim, witches; the Hhoberim, charmers; the Yidchhlonim, wizards; the Kosmin, diviners or prophets, consultants with familiar spirits; Hhonenim and Gozesim, soothsayers, &c. though distinguished by so many different characters as professors of the black arts, yet, from undoubted authority, one person often pretended to be master of the whole circle of magic sciences.

NOTE ^k Page 332, line 11

The borders of fair Mizraim's land begin

Egypt, anciently so called.

NOTE ^m Page 339, line 24.

In aged Samuel's form, with solemn air

“ God permitted the devil to put on Samuel's shape, that they, who would not receive the love of the truth, might be given up to strong delusions, and believe a lie ” *Matthew Henry*

“ We cannot believe there was any thing here but the devil in the likeness of Samuel: this likeness, and a pretence to be Samuel, was the reason of his being so called. It is absurd to imagine that God would raise one from the dead to answer Saul, when he refused to answer him by more common methods; absurd to suppose a glorified saint subject to infernal enchantments, or that God would do any thing tending to honour diabolical arts. Nothing in the history evinces the spectre to be a prophet. That God would take Saul’s kingdom from him, and give it to David, was publicly known from the posture of affairs. And who knows not but God may, for holy ends, give devils hints of future events; nay, the very speech of the spectre tends to prove him a devil: he never hints the sinfulness of dealing with wizards, though for this very sin Saul was cut off. 1 Chron. x. 12, 13. He pretends that Samuel in his glorified state had been disquieted; he pretends that Saul and his sons in general should on the morrow be with him; whereas two of his sons, Armoni and Mephibosheth, lived long after, and were hanged by the Gibeonites, and Ishbosheth lived several years. Nor can we believe that wicked Saul and godly Jonathan could ever be together with the spectre either in heaven or hell. And, in fine, when we consider how long Saul tarried with the witch, and had to return to his army, and that meanwhile David was dismissed from the camp of the Philistines, and went as far as the south border of Canaan, and routed the Philistines who had burnt Ziklag, it can scarce be believed that Saul and his sons could be slain on the morrow” *Brown.*

NOTE ⁿ Page 419, line 26.

Divided from their heads.

See Ezekiel xxvii. 31.

NOTE ^o Page 421, line 5.

—— and let the blue-wing’d blast

We had no sooner got into the plains, than we felt great symptoms of the Simoom; and, about a quarter before twelve, Idris cried out “ the Simoom! the Simoom!” My curiosity would not suffer me to fall down, without looking behind me. A little to the east I saw the coloured haze as before. It seemed now to be less compressed, and to have with it a shade of blue, &c.

Bruce’s Travels, vol. iv.

NOTE 8 Page 426, line 1

Attend the sacred burning

See 1 Samuel xxxi 12

NOTE 9 Page 426, line 19

Dirges that much the fallen chiefs bewail'd

The custom of singing doleful tunes round the dead passed from the Hebrews to the Greeks, Romans, and Asiatics. There were weepers of both sexes by profession, children were likewise employed in this office

NOTE 10 Page 426, line 21

Liv'd bright through many an age

“He bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the Kesheth, the bow; i. e. the song was so entitled for the sake of Jonathan's bow, the achievements of which are here celebrated. It was preserved in the book of Jasher, a collection of poems long since lost”

Matthew Henry

NOTE 11 Page 427, line 21

The tender David mournfully intume

“Put thou my tears into thy bottle,” intimates the custom of putting tears into the *Ampulla*, or *Lacrymule*, so well known among the Romans, which was more anciently in use amongst the eastern nations, and particularly among the Hebrews

See Montfaucon's Int. l. i. c. 10

THE END
